

AN  
APPEAL

TO  
THE PUBLIC,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

*The Riots in Birmingham,*

PART II.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A LETTER FROM W. RUSSELL, ESQ. TO THE AUTHOR.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F. R. S, &c.

---

SED QUÆ CAUSA GRAVIS, QUÆ TRISTIS ORIGO RUINÆ,  
FORSITAN IGNORAS. EGO NUNC VERISSIMA PAUCIS  
EXPEDIAM.

PETRARCHÆ AFRICA.

---

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,

---

1792.

AN  
APPEAL

TO  
THE PUBLIC

ON THE SUBJECT OF

THE ROYAL MUSEUM

PART II.



AS AUTHORIZED BY THE ACT OF PARLIAMENT

IN THE YEAR 1800

LONDON

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1797



## THE PREFACE.

THE facts advanced in the former part of my *Appeal to the Public relating to the Riots in Birmingham* having appeared to myself, and my friends, incontrovertibly true, I did not, at the time that I wrote it, expect that I should have any occasion to trouble the world with another publication on a subject which to myself must be sufficiently disagreeable. But as not only have those facts been denied, but much additional censure been reflected upon me, and the Dissenters, by the clergy of Birmingham, who have employed the pen of Mr. Burn, I find myself under the necessity of engaging in a controversy, the termination of which I do not see. For I think myself bound in honour, and in duty to my fellow-sufferers, not to withhold whatever shall appear to me to be proper for our common vindication.

Let our enemies, then, dispute our facts, and advance their farther calumnies. I shall not fail to reply to them, till the Public shall be in possession of all that is necessary to form their judgment on a subject that certainly interests the whole community. For, if any one set of men may be insulted and oppressed with impunity on account of their religious persuasion, if neither the common courts of law, nor the cool opinion of their countrymen, will do them justice, another set may, in their turn, be exposed to the same, and an all-grasping and domineering hierarchy may crush us all. It behoves us, then, seriously to consider our situation, and let our enemies consider theirs. And the case of persecution for religious principle is no new thing in the world; we have but too many precedents before us to determine our judgment, and direct our conduct.

It will be observed, and, I doubt not, to our prejudice, that but few *names* appear in this narrative of facts. But, considering the great prevalence of a violent party spirit among the more wealthy and powerful in the town and neighbourhood of Birmingham, and

## THE PREFACE.

and how much it will appear that some persons have already suffered in consequence of giving evidence in favour of Dissenters, and being otherwise friendly to them, it would be unjustifiable in me to expose them to farther injury without very particular reason. Every name, however, that is alluded to in this work is ready to be produced if necessary. If, in any very particular case, I should decline giving my authority, I can only pledge my own veracity for *having* a sufficient authority, which my reader will believe or not, according to his idea of my moral character. Except a very few, all the facts I have mentioned, are contained in *affidavits* voluntarily tendered; and many more, I doubt not, will appear when it shall seem to be safe to the parties. However, those affidavits which tend most to criminate particular persons have already been recited by Mr. Whitbread, and others, when an inquiry was moved for in the House of Commons into the causes of the riot. Knowing, therefore, what is laid to their charge, it behoves them to take the proper method of removing the imputations under which they lie. A good account of the debate on this subject may now be seen



in the *Parliamentary Register*, published by Mr. Debrett. From perusing *this* our countrymen will form their own judgment, whether there was sufficient cause for public inquiry, and whether the members of the House of Commons acted as the representatives of the Dissenters as well as of the other inhabitants of the country, and whether they were disposed to inquire into, and redress, wrongs done to *them*.

The plan, and proper origin, of the riot has not yet been discovered; and many persons begin to suspect, as Dr. Parr, in his truly liberal publication, has hinted, that it had a higher origin than Warwickshire. There were predictions in London of what would be done at Birmingham. But, if any person in power should wish to oppress us, we ascribe it to the incessant accusations of our enemies, especially among the clergy; and time will shew that those accusations are mere calumnies, assertions destitute of all foundation in fact.

No blunder is absolutely impossible in some politicians; but I can hardly think that, at this day, any statesman could hope to  
avail



## THE PREFACE.

vii

avail himself of the prejudices of the majority of a nation to intimidate and crush the minority, when his ultimate views were really hostile to the liberties of all, such policy is so easily seen through; and it would be nothing less than insanity to endeavour to intimidate by *a mob*, the excesses of which it may be impossible to restrain, and which, once encouraged and excited, may soon take a different, and even opposite, direction. In no country in Europe is a mob so much to be dreaded as in this, for in no country in Europe are the populace so ignorant, so unprincipled, so prophane, so improvident, so licentious, and so much disposed to every species of violence short of murder. If our government be so excellent as it is boasted to be, how came this great and formidable evil to exist?

In general this extreme ignorance and profligacy are to be found in manufacturing towns, where the poor are taught nothing besides their particular art or trade, and where they have no leisure, or means, of acquiring general knowledge; where they work part of their time, and spend the rest in the alehouse, wholly improvident with re-

spect to futurity, in this life or another. This necessarily forms the most degraded state of human nature. But for this great evil the government, in church or state, should provide some remedy.

Much pains has particularly been taken to represent the Unitarian Dissenters, among whom I class myself, as disaffected to government, in order to make our sufferings the subject of less regret, as if the chastisement we have met with, though not legally inflicted, was nothing more than we deserved; when in reality our tenets have no relation whatever to any thing of a political nature, nor have we interfered in politics more than other persons.

Among other calumniators, Mr. Burke particularly distinguished himself by his invectives against us in the House of Commons; but he only discovered his utter ignorance of our principles and conduct. As some evidence that the Unitarian Dissenters are the enemies of the constitution, he alleged the toasts that were given at the first annual meeting of the Unitarian society, none of which,

which, however, were at all disloyal, or breathed a spirit unbecoming Englishmen.

Mr. Burke was ignorant that the *Unitarian Society* by no means represents the Unitarians of England, being nothing more than the association of a very few of them for the purpose of distributing books, and certainly are not one in a thousand of the Unitarians in England. That society has no political object whatever, and the toasts were quite an accidental thing, owing to the company of some strangers, who chiefly suggested them at the time, none of them being provided beforehand; and it was not the intention of the society to continue the custom.

Unitarianism bears no relation to any system of politics, and in fact there are Unitarians among the friends, as well as the enemies, of what is called *government*. There are great numbers of them in the church of England, as well as out of it; and there are many professed Unitarians who object to the forming of any society, so far are they from wishing to make themselves conspicuous, or from being of a factious and turbulent disposition.

Unfavourable



Unfavourable as the present times are to Unitarians and Dissenters, they may change in our favour, and even in a short space. Events are powerful and speedy instructors, and produce important changes in the sentiments of whole nations, as we have lately seen both in America and in France. This is an age of revolutions, and should teach the High Church party in this country not insolence, but moderation.

At all events men should do justice, whatever their own future situation may be; and it is only justice that the Dissenters of Birmingham ask of their countrymen. But they have not yet found it, except with respect to the demolition of the new meeting house; though all damages done by rioters should be most amply repaired by the society, which is constituted for the very purpose of preventing, or redressing, the wrongs of individuals. It is notorious that the courts of law have by no means given us complete indemnification. We trust, however, there is still so much justice in the nation, that our representatives will, on cooler reflection, do for us what was done for the sufferers by the riots in 1780,  
and



and punish those who may be proved to have been chargeable with a neglect of duty.

It will be proper in this Preface to give some account of *Mr. Russell's Letter* to me, which is subjoined to this part of my Appeal, and of those articles in the *Appendix* which are not mentioned in the course of it.

Mr. Russell thought himself at one time particularly called upon to vindicate himself and his brethren from the accusation of the High Church party in the reply of Mr. Burn, especially as he knew that I wished to decline writing any more on the subject. But finding that this was impossible, I desired him to throw some part of what he had written, (containing such particulars as he was best able to speak to) into the form of a *Letter to me*, to be subjoined to my work. And I think myself happy in this, and in every opportunity of appearing in company with a man to whom I owe so much, in whose society I have had so much true enjoyment, from the mutual communication of similar sentiments; and whose separation from me I consider as one of the most unpleasant consequences

sequences of the riot. But we are all at the disposal of one who knows where to place us better than we do ourselves.

Having, in my former Appendix, given several *Addresses* to me, those who were pleased with *them* will not be displeased to see added to them that from the *Dissenters and Delegates of the Dissenters in England to the sufferers in the Birmingham riots*, with the Answer. In the Gentleman's Magazine there were several sneers at me on account of there being no Address to me from any Dissenters in London; and it was insinuated that no such thing having taken place, the Dissenters in general were far from approving my conduct, or condoling with me on the occasion. This Address, being a full answer to those insinuations, was sent by a friend of mine to the printer of the Magazine, but it was neither inserted, nor any notice taken of its being sent. I hope Mr. Nichols will not in future pretend to *impartiality* in his conduct of that work. I could not have a stronger testimony to the propriety of my general conduct as a Dissenter than this Address, and the answer; and it is a particular satisfaction to me,

me, that all the denominations of Dissenters concurred in it.

I ought also to observe (and the remembrance of it will give me pleasure as long as I live) that the first congregation to which I preached after the riot was one of Calvinistic Baptists at Amersham, and at the unanimous request of the minister and people. The Sunday following I had invitations to preach to two other Calvinistic congregations. One good effect of the riot has been to promote this liberal spirit, so becoming all denominations of Christians. Though we differ in many things, and lay suitable stress on those points of difference, we are sensible that the articles about which we are all agreed are of infinitely more moment; and on these I can with pleasure enlarge, without hurting the feelings of any Christian whatever.

No. XIV. will shew how far Mr. Burn's assertion concerning the cause of Mr. Curtis's declining to attend a funeral in company with Mr. Scholefield *only* left he should afterwards do the same with *me*, is from the truth. Now that I have left them the same low bigotry continues,



continues, and is openly avowed by them. And No. XIII. will show the extreme malignity of some of the High Church party since the riot.

The account from Stourbridge, No. XIX. shows that the same illiberal spirit of the High Church party extended to the neighbourhood of Birmingham, and existed there long before my coming among them, and also its continuance and increase since that time. The spirited and excellent publications of Mr. Field shew that the same despicable spirit prevails at Warwick; and I doubt not every other town in that neighbourhood could furnish a similar history; so effectually have the clergy infused their own spirit into the members of their church; and nothing surely can be more disgraceful in this enlightened age. The bigotry of the Roman Catholic clergy was never greater, or more intolerant, than that of the clergy of the church of England in that part of this protestant country, and all bigotry is founded in ignorance. Their narrow education, and other circumstances, easily account for the whole.

The letter relating to the destruction of



my library, was written by a person who I had heard was on the spot, and I imagined had been present at the beginning of it, having, though a member of the church of England, gone thither to save what he could of my property, and especially my books and manuscripts. This letter furnishes the most unexceptionable evidence of the savage and brutal fury with which those worse than Goths and Vandals were instigated to destroy every thing belonging to me.

Mr. Carpenter's letter will exhibit a specimen of the sufferings of those whose names do not appear in any list of sufferers. I wish that more such accounts may be collected before the particulars be forgotten. As yet this country has but an imperfect idea of the magnitude and extent of this mischief. In due time I hope that all the world will have an opportunity of seeing it; and let our enemies indulge themselves in the contemplation of it if they feel themselves so disposed. I hope it will be the last gratification that they will have of the kind. Indeed, their wrath is as great, as if *they knew that their time was short,*

Rev.

Rev. xii. 12. This violence will only precipitate their ruin.

Their best policy would be moderation, and a hearty concurrence in the repeal of the impolitic Corporation and Test Acts, which I hope no Dissenter will ever trouble the country with petitioning for any more. I never proposed any application to the legislature for that purpose, and I trust all the Dissenters will now feel as Paul did when he had been unjustly imprisoned. Let the country do away its own disgrace, and provide for its own greater security, by doing us justice.

Posterity will judge between us and the High Church clergy of this kingdom, not only who have been the best friends of the liberties and true interests of the country, but even of the reigning family. It was the fulsome flattery, and abject principles of the clergy that chiefly contributed to precipitate the Stuarts to their ruin, and they are acting the same part at present. They taught Charles II. to behave with the most indecent ingratitude and treachery to the Presbyterians, who were the  
true

true authors of his restoration, and they are dictating the same ingratitude to the present reigning family, to which the Dissenters have ever been most zealously attached, while the clergy were almost universally disaffected.

These are facts that lie on the very surface of the English History, and yet the clergy have the assurance to charge *us* with disaffection. If there be any disposition towards it, it is what their violence and injustice have driven us to. There are others, we trust, who can better distinguish the *signs of the times* than they, and who will not again sacrifice the interests of the nation, and the constitution itself, to their bigotry, avarice, and ambition.

Many of the facts introduced into this part of my *Appeal* will be found to be the same with those that are mentioned, and spiritedly remarked upon, by Mr. Edwards, in his *Letters to the British nation*, as well as alleged by Mr. Whitbread and others in the House of Commons. In reality we had no other than the same authorities. I should not, however, have thought it necessary to have made so

many of the same observations with Mr. Edwards, if this part of my Appeal had not been printed before I saw his last Number. I earnestly recommend this last Number of his Letters, as containing several more particulars than had come to my knowledge.

I cannot omit this opportunity of congratulating my late congregation on the acquisition of two such valuable ministers as Mr. Edwards and Mr. Jones, whose first and truly excellent discourse to them is now before the public. They have, in a great measure, verified my prediction, in my *Letter to the Inhabitants of Birmingham*; and the increasing numbers and spirit of the Unitarian Dissenters in that town must have already convinced the bigoted High Church party there, that they have been far from gaining any thing by the riot, or by my expulsion from the place. Such has ever been, and such, from the nature of things, must always be, the effect of intolerance and persecution. But bigotry will neither read nor reflect, so that to this dæmon, equally furious and blind, the instructive page of history is unfolded in vain.

Mr.



Mr. Burn charges the Unitarians, p. 102, with "inviting the aid of persecution." If we have given the invitation, the High Church party at Birmingham have been as ready to give as we to ask, and have thereby given us the assistance that we found we wanted. And though Mr. Burn says, as a proof that I have not been *persecuted*, that "I have not suffered as a Christian;" my case is so far common with those who are usually termed *Protestant Martyrs* in the reign of queen Mary, in this country, and of Philip II. and Louis XIV. abroad: for none of them suffered as Christians. We have this, however, in common with the proper Christian martyrs, that we equally suffer *for conscience sake*. "Much less," adds Mr. Burn, "has it been made to appear that the *clergy* were accessory to his misfortune." When I wrote the former part of this Appeal, I did not consider them as accessory to it, but now, in a certain sense, I do so; and they are called upon either to vindicate themselves, or to bear the imputation; and they will, no doubt, do that which they will find the easiest to them. If it be true, as they now pretend, that *they* lament the riot in

Birmingham (which the total failure of their object may now perhaps lead them to do) numbers of their brethren in many parts of England do not. I could enlarge greatly in my evidence of this, if it were prudent so to do. No other event in modern times has shown so decisively what spirit the High Church clergy of this country are really of. It is the spirit of church establishments universally, and truly *Anti-Christian*.

I deferred the printing, and after that the publication, of this work, which was composed in August, with a view to give my readers an account of the complete termination of every thing relating to the riot in Birmingham; hoping that the very inadequate compensation that was awarded us would have been paid at least before this time. But finding this to be still delayed, and that there is no near prospect of the business being dispatched, though the term fixed by the law for this purpose is expired, (it being now nearly a year and a half since the disaster, and eight months since the cause was heard) and many of my friends and my enemies too call for the work, I have consented to withhold it no longer.

I shall close this preface with repeating what I have observed more than once in the course of the work, viz. that depending, as I necessarily must, on the information of others, with respect to the *facts* introduced, or alluded to, in it, it is very possible that I may have been misled. But I wish to give our adversaries an opportunity of exculpating themselves, if they can, from the charges brought against them; and certainly they are under obligation to me on this account; it being always an advantage to know what our adversaries say, and believe, concerning us, as we may then either defend ourselves, or neglect the accusation, as we think proper.

CLAPTON, Jan. 1, 1793.

THE TRIAL

I shall state the position as it appears  
what I have collected more than once in the  
course of the work, without departing from  
the facts, and on the foundation of which  
in relation to the facts, and on the  
basis of which, it is my belief that I may  
be justified in saying that I have to give  
the best of the matter. But I wish to give  
advantages and opportunities of exchanging  
themselves, if they can, from the changes  
which I have made, and which I believe  
under obligation to my country; it  
being the only advantage to show what our  
advantages are, and how we are  
as we may then see the result of our  
work, and the result of our work.

DE617



THE  
CONTENTS.

SECTION I.

PAGE

*INTRODUCTION, and of the exaggerated  
Charges in Mr. Burn's Reply* - - - 1

SECTION II.

*Of Mr. Burn's Accusation of me, and his chal-  
lenging me to defend myself* - - - 12

SECTION III.

*Of Events previous to the Riot, and of the more  
distant Causes of it* - - - 20

SECTION IV.

*Of the predisposing Causes of the Riot* - - - 36

SECTION V.

*Circumstances previous to the Riot, and more  
immediately connected with the Cause of it* - 43

SECTION

SECTION VI.

<i>Circumstances attending the Commencement of the Riot</i>	- - - - -	53
-------------------------------------------------------------	-----------	----

SECTION VII.

<i>Of the Conduct of the Magistrates, and others, after the Commencement of the Riot</i>	- - -	57
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------	----

SECTION VIII.

<i>Circumstances subsequent to the Riot</i>	- - -	71
---------------------------------------------	-------	----

SECTION IX.

<i>Observations on the Proceedings in the Courts of Judicature on Occasion of the Riot</i>	- - -	82
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------	----

SECTION X.

<i>Of the Approbation of the Riot, and the Extent of High Church Principles, which were the Cause of it, in other Parts of the Kingdom</i>	- - -	99
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------	----

.....

<i>Mr. Russell's Letter to Dr. Priestley</i>	- - -	115
----------------------------------------------	-------	-----

APPENDIX.

A P P E N D I X.

- No. I. *The Rev. Mr. Scholefield's Advertisement relating to the Sunday Schools at Birmingham* 145
- No. II. *Extract from the original Advertisement relating to the Public Library at Birmingham* 148
- No. III. *An Address to the Subscribers to the Birmingham Library on the Subject of Mr. Cooke's Motion, to restrict the Committee in the Choice of Books, with a View to exclude Controversial Divinity* - - - - - 149
- No. IV. *Extract from the free Address to Protestant Dissenters, as such* - - - - - 160
- No. V. *Copy of the Forged Letter found at my House, 16th July, 1791* - - - - - 164
- No. VI. *Mr. Abel Humphrys's Advertisement relating to the Calumny of Mr. William Gem* - 165
- No. VII. *Copy of a Letter intended to be addressed to the Clergy of the Town of Birmingham* 166
- No. VIII.

No. VIII. *Extract from a Letter inserted in the  
Sbrewsbury Chronicle, Sept. 14, 1791* - - 170

No. IX. *An Epitaph written for me by some Per-  
son in the West of England* - - - 172

No. X. *A Letter addressed to the People of Eng-  
land in the Public Advertiser for Saturday,  
Aug. 18, 1792* - - - 173

No. XI. *Copy of an Advertisement in the Bir-  
mingham Newspaper, relating to the Address  
to me from the Philosophical Society at Derby* 180

No. XII. *An Answer to the preceding by the So-  
ciety* - - - - - ibid.

No. XIII. *A Description of an Allegorical Medal  
published at Birmingham since the Riot* - 183

No. XIV. *An Account of the Clergy of Birming-  
ham refusing to walk in funeral Processions with  
Dissenting Members since the Riot* - - - 184

No. XV. *Extract of a Letter written to me by  
a Person who was in my Library during the  
Demolition of the House, in Answer to one in  
which I had requested his Evidence concerning  
it* - - - - - 185

No. XVI.



No. XVI. *An Address of the Dissenters and Delegates of the Dissenters in England, to the Sufferers in the Riot at Birmingham* - - - 185

No. XVII. *The Answer by the Sufferers* - - 189

No. XVIII. *An Account of the Alarm and Loss of Mr. Carpenter of Woodrow, in a Letter from his Brother* - - - - - 192

No. XIX. *An Account of the High Church Spirit, which has long prevailed at Stourbridge* - 197

.....

*Additions* - - - - - 206

ERRATA.

Pref. p. xii. l. 7, for *Dissenters*, read *Delegates*.

P. 5, l. 8, for *or*, read *as*.

26, l. 10, for *and*, as read *or*, *as*.

32, l. 7, (b.) for *members*, read *member*.

61, l. 12, (b.) read *the king has sent us word*.

63, l. 12, read *a toast*.

63, l. 18, ~~dele perhaps at the same time~~.

81, l. 1, (b) for *essert*, read *insert*.

104, l. 10, (b.) for *Rose*, read *Hope*.

N. B. (b.) Signifies *from the bottom of the page*.

7 DE61

# AN APPEAL

TO  
THE PUBLIC,

ON THE SUBJECT OF  
THE RIOTS IN BIRMINGHAM.

## PART II.

---

### SECTION I.

*Introduction, and of the exaggerated Charges in Mr.  
Burn's Reply.*

I DO not remember that I ever entered upon any composition with so much reluctance as I do upon this, though not in the least from any apprehension of not being able to acquit myself to my own satisfaction in it. Indeed, in this respect, no task ever appeared to me more easy and inviting, as I dare say my impartial readers (and some such I hope to find) will be sufficiently convinced as I proceed. But I wish to look back as little as possible to an unpleasant scene, excepting in such a manner as to derive benefit from my reflections upon it. Being, however, loudly called upon

B

by

by the clergy of Birmingham, who have employed the pen of Mr. Burn, and who sanction his performance, I find myself under a necessity of vindicating what I advanced in my *Appeal* on the subject of the riots in that town.

I long entertained hopes that this might be unnecessary, on account of the candour with which my *Appeal* was written; and, circumstanced as I was, it would naturally be concluded, that I would be as guarded as possible with respect to all the facts that I had occasion to introduce; and as I had no vindictive feelings, I imagined that, considering what I had suffered (more in some respects than most persons now living could be made to suffer) I wrote in such a manner as my enemies themselves would think to be temperate. And, indeed, I have the satisfaction to find, that not only my particular friends, but many who were not previously disposed to be my friends, thought that the temper with which I wrote was not unbecoming a Christian. Notwithstanding this, the clergy of Birmingham express a very different idea of my performance, and it is on nothing but an appeal to *facts* that the propriety of what I advanced before, and of what I shall now advance in defence of it, must depend.

What I have had most occasion to complain of, ever since my writings have drawn any degree of attention upon me, has been unfounded calumny, flanders



scandals of the most malignant nature, of which no evidence could be produced, but to which confident assertion procured credit. One of these, respecting my converting Silas Dean to atheism, is acknowledged in this *Reply* to my Appeal. That stories grow by passing from one hand to another, and that by this means mere suppositions come to be considered as undoubted facts, is not uncommon; and it is not easy to ascertain the degree of guilt in any of the relaters. But to be charged with asserting the very contrary of what a writer does assert, and in the very publication replied to (which is of course immediately under the eye of the person who professedly replies to it) is much more extraordinary, as it argues such a force of prejudice as the evidence of a man's own senses will not remove; and there are more, and more striking, instances of this violent prejudice in Mr. Burn's reply to my Appeal, than I have seen in any piece of controversial writing whatever. If he ever had read my work, he had quite forgotten the contents of it at the time of his writing, and could never have compared the two together. I shall, therefore, do it for him, and let the reader judge between us.

Mr. Burn says, p. 41, the great object in the narrative part of my work was "to criminate the clergy," and that I most evidently do this, p. 3, "without discrimination." Now I do not know how it was possible for me to discriminate more

expressly than I have done in the account that I gave of the conduct of the clergy; calling some of them *my friends, engaged in the same cause*, Preface, p. xxiii. and even acknowledging, p. 68, that some of them were "among the first to afford me substantial assistance." If, therefore, I had any where censured the clergy in general, it ought to have been understood with this limitation, which had been sufficiently expressed before. But I think it will be found that every separate passage, if the scope of it be attended to, is sufficiently guarded, and conveys no censure on the clergy as a body, but only on certain descriptions of them. Mr. Burn should, at least, have quoted some passage in which this censure seems to be general, and unqualified; but he does no such thing, contenting himself with asserting it, without producing any evidence of it at all.

The picture that he represents me as having given of the clergy of Birmingham in particular, has no existence but in his own imagination, which, with respect to exaggerated charges, is sufficiently fruitful. "Dr. Priestley's account of the clergy, &c." he says, p. 47, "is of that kind which makes the worst things he can say of them probable. The idea of 'the present clergy of Birmingham,' p. x. "will but exhibit the detested image of a junto degraded by their vices from the rank not of ministers merely, but even of men. Either the clergy of 'Birmingham,' p. 17, "have forfeited their rank  
" in

“ in society, and their claim on its protection, or  
“ Dr. Priestley has, in the face of his country, in-  
“ curred the guilt of accusing the innocent, on the  
“ ground of invented facts, and of giving plausibi-  
“ lity to the composition, by the affectation of ear-  
“ dour and christian meekness. It is not, permit-  
“ ted,” p. 101, “ to the clergy of Birmingham,  
“ thus publicly arraigned, or the abettors of the  
“ late riots, to throw in their mite of concern at the  
“ outrages that have been committed on property,  
“ on the feelings of individuals, on general science,  
“ and on the plainest dictates of humanity. These  
“ are interests in which, if our accuser may be cre-  
“ dited, we can feel no concern. It seems, in the  
“ opinion of Dr. Priestley, that to be, and to act,  
“ as a man of principle in the established church,  
“ deprives a man, by a kind of professional neces-  
“ sity, of every claim to the character of humanity,  
“ and levels him at once to the condition of a  
“ brute.”

Now this frightful idea of the clergy of Birmingham is as far from having any countenance in my *Appeal*, as it is from my thoughts. I never had, or expressed, any worse idea of them than that some of them were *bigots*; and there are many very honest and worthy men, of whom it cannot be denied that they are so: i. e. persons who are so fully persuaded, though without reason, of the truth of their own principles, that they think much too ill



of those of others, and are thereby led to support their principles by methods which cannot be justified.

With respect to the riot, the worst that I ever thought, or expressed, concerning the clergy of Birmingham, was that some of them had represented the Dissenters in general, and myself in particular, in such a light, as, considering the previous state of men's minds in that part of the country, could not but tend to inflame them against us, and prepare them, though unintended by themselves, for the outrages that were committed afterwards; and of this I shall presently produce ample proof. If I have said any thing more than this, let my words be quoted, and their sense ascertained. But all that the reader has yet seen in the above extracts are the words of Mr. Burn, and not mine:

Mr. Burn, however, says, p. 124, " the blame  
" must, as usual, fall upon persons of better condi-  
" tion, and among these the clergy must of course  
" be regarded as principals in the guilt of the  
" above horrid transactions." But what is still  
more unaccountable than this, he says, p. xiii.  
" he has commenced a regular attack upon four  
" clergymen by name, whom he accuses, by the  
" most direct implication, as having been the chief  
" movers of the popular tumult and outrage, as  
" incendiaries, and pillagers of houses, &c. &c. If  
" the clergy," he says, p. ix. " whose names have  
" been



“ been brought forwards on this occasion really are,  
“ or should even be suspected to be, the wretches  
“ which Dr. Priestley represents them, their guilt  
“ must form an anomaly in the history of crimes.”

Now I have been far from accusing any clergymen whatever as principals in promoting the riot; and what Mr. Burn can mean by saying that I have “ commenced an attack upon four clergymen by name,” I am utterly unable to guess. I do not know that I have mentioned four of the clergy in any view, and certainly not as promoters of the riot; and yet two of them, Mr. Curtis and Mr. Madan, make a separate defence of their conduct, as if they had been formally arraigned. It is easy to answer accusations invented on purpose to be answered; but of what consequence is this, except to those who are imposed upon by the exaggerated and false representation, reflecting blame upon the accuser, instead of answering the proper accusation? In all that I have quoted from Mr. Burn, he has only added, to that *calumny* with which I have been already sufficiently loaded, and I publicly call upon him to vindicate himself from this charge.

I must, however, acknowledge that Mr. Burn's reply to my Appeal, considered as written with their concurrence, gives me a much worse opinion of the clergy of Birmingham than I was disposed to entertain before. It bears too evident marks of real

malignity. It shews the unrelenting temper of those who have done an injury; and on the whole, if I had my choice of the two (harsh as is the censure implied in what I am going to say), I had rather go out of the world with the disposition of the brutal but ignorant rioters, than with theirs.

It is equally untrue, and unjust, in Mr. Burn to insinuate, p. iv. that I represented Mr. Madan as "an unprincipled savage;" in consequence of which some persons, he says, "having conceived this idea of him, were astonished when they were assured, that the urbanity of his manners, and the benevolence of his character, rendered him universally respected." For certainly, this is the very idea that I myself have given of Mr. Madan in my *Familiar Letters*; and my observation on it is, that if such men as he can be so inveterate an enemy to the Dissenters, where are we to look for candour, or justice? For any thing that appears to the contrary, Bonner and Gardiner might be polite, and even good-natured men.

Mr. Burn seems to have imagined that my idea of himself and his brethren is such as he has conceived of *me*, and this is shocking enough. But, ill as I have been used, I think much better of them, and even of the rioters themselves. In my next section I shall inform my reader what that idea is, and for this I shall not, like him, produce a picture  
from

from my own imagination, but quote his own words. It is not a little remarkable that, though Mr. Burn professes to write an answer to my Appeal, he expressly quotes very little of it, but replies to something which he gives his reader to understand is contained in it, but which it will be in vain for him to look for there. Many, however, will read his Reply who will neither read my Appeal, nor this defence of it; and with such readers his method of writing will answer well enough. This is not the way in which I treat Mr. Burn, or any of my opponents. Whether my replies be sufficient or not, at least I let my reader see what it is that I reply to, and in their own words. Of this fair method this defence of my Appeal will be a specimen:

When Mr. Burn says, p. 34, that in his Reply to my Letters ~~to him~~ he answered my *arguments*, but passed by the *abuse*, he quotes nothing, but leaves his reader to suppose that I had written something that might be termed *abuse*. I wish his readers would look into those Letters. They will be much at a loss to conjecture what it is that Mr. Burn meant to represent in that light. But I suppose that any thing that gives pain, from the difficulty of answering it, Mr. Burn will call *abuse*, as a libel is said to be no less a libel, though it be ever so true.

In that work of his to which my Letters were an answer, he thought himself at liberty to give the



most unfavourable idea of my sentiments, evidently calculated to excite the resentment of his readers against me, ascribing to me the worst designs, as well as the grossest mistakes, and yet in *him* this must not be termed abuse. Though my only object in every thing that I wrote about the person of Christ was to ascertain what the testimony of the apostles concerning him really was, and I constantly appealed to their testimony as decisive, he strangely represented me as denying the *infallibility of their testimony*, which he undertook to defend against me; and with as little pretence, though it served to excite an alarm at my principles, he described them as leading to all vice and wickedness. But there are readers with whom any representations from a clergyman, in such a cause, will have weight,

Abusive as Mr. Burn represents my polemical writings to be, I have never yet charged any of my opponents with bad intentions, or questioned the goodness of their understandings; but I have always imputed their mistakes to *prejudice*, the effect of early impressions: and if my own opinion, as I must suppose, be right, and consequently those of my opponents be wrong, what less offensive hypothesis could I frame for it?

One would think that Mr. Burn had never read my Appeal, to which he professes to reply, all his charges are so totally void of truth, or so shamefully exaggerated.



exaggerated. Speaking of my observations on the address to the rioters *as friends and fellow-churchmen*, he calls it, p. 63, "a transaction most shamefully represented by the author; and that, in consequence of the imposition contained in Dr. Priestley's statement, this transaction was brought forward in parliament." "It is remarkable," he says, p. 65, "that the obvious policy of seeming to coincide in sentiment with a mob, for the purpose of influencing their opinions, and controlling their conduct, should have been actually construed into a real design of promoting and inflaming their violence." After calling the rioters *the synagogue of Satan*, he says, p. 69, "If there be any thing doubtful remaining, it must appear to every impartial observer, to be the integrity of that man's motives, who can thus, to answer a purpose, make churchmen of rioters, and in the same breath too in which he declares it to be questionable whether such miscreants can be said to be of any church."

Now all that I have made of this circumstance was to shew that the rioters were considered as churchmen, and that their object was the destruction of Dissenters. I believe, indeed, and I shall prove, that there was positive encouragement given to the rioters by churchmen of better condition, but I do not say that their design in this particular

part of their conduct was to promote and inflame their violence. Certainly, however, to address them without giving any intimation that what they had hitherto done was wrong, was not likely to prevent their proceeding farther.

## SECTION II.

*Of Mr. Burn's Accusation of me, and his challenging me to defend myself.*

LET us now see what kind of language Mr. Burn makes use of in his Reply to my Appeal, which he will, no doubt, say contains nothing that can properly be termed *abuse*.

Speaking of what I say of the clergy of Birmingham, he calls it, p. 99, "a malignant hypothesis." In p. 84, he speaks of "the unequalled malignity and injustice of my representations." He calls the language I hold with respect to my enemies, p. xv. "the most complete insolence, and abuse, that malignity itself could have suggested." According to him, p. 100, I am "an accuser of the innocent, not merely without sufficient evidence, but in open defiance of the most palpable and uniform series of facts." Of my

my *Letter to the Inhabitants of Birmingham*, he says, p. 39, "it was as great an outrage upon character, as the conduct of the rioters was upon property."

One of the most curious insinuations of Mr. Burn is his representing me as so overbearing, that it was an offence, p. 77, in the clergy of Birmingham to think for themselves without my permission. This is the more extraordinary, as he says, p. 37, "No man has done more than I have to invite, and even to provoke discussion." Would I have done this, if the controverting of my opinions had been so very offensive to me? But while Mr. Burn quotes nothing, and only gives his own idea of me, and of my writings, he has no check upon him besides his own discretion. I will venture to assert, that all who are really acquainted with me will say that Mr. Burn's account is the reverse of my character.

But the most injurious of all Mr. Burn's insinuations are those by which he would give his readers to understand, that my writings are calculated to disturb the peace of the country, and that I am intending something more than the mere discussion of theological or political questions. Of the Preface to my *Letters* to him, he says, p. 27, "it is written with more freedom; in the opinion of many, than is practically consistent with the intire peace of the country." This was also the object of the



Extracts that were made from the Preface, which were sent to all the bishops and members of the House of Commons, as every thing in that Preface that shewed that my only object was free and calm discussion, was omitted, and the other passages were so put together, as to be calculated to excite alarm.

With the same unfairness Mr. Burn represents my *Letter to Mr. Pitt*, p. 21, as “menacing, “and insolent, most unconstitutionally infringing “upon freedom of debate; a personal invective, “and not an answer to arguments. It was,” he says, p. 19, “a fair developement of what I would “be at, and in the judgment of sober men marked “with some degree of precision the boundary of “my ambition.” Now as few men write more intelligibly than I do, it is very easy to see the extent of my views, in that, or in any other of my publications; and this has always been to state my own opinions on any subject, and to invite the fullest discussion of them. What can be my *ambition*, when I plead for abolishing all civil establishments of religion, as hostile to the genius of it, and a burden to the state; and when I claim nothing for myself but what I equally plead for all persons without exception? Besides, in all my proposals for the reformation of the greatest abuses, I expressly say that I would have no man disturbed in his present possession, but that the retrenchment should affect the successor only. Is this ambition? Is it not the greatest moderation?

But,



But in me nothing can be moderation. It must be ambition, or something equally bad.

Perhaps the most perverse of Mr. Burn's constructions of my writing, is his inferring from what I have said of the French "having no court for the nobility and clergy to look up to, and to depend upon," that I consider it, p. 30, "as the duty of Englishmen to renovate this part of their constitution, which lodges the government in the hands of an individual;" that is, that it is my wish, and I doubt not, he would add, that it will be my endeavour, that there be no king in England. It is very fortunate for me that I never wrote a Roman History: for had I expressed any approbation of the conduct of the Romans in banishing the Tarquins, Mr. Burn's inference of my antipathy to all kingly power would have been much stronger, as they left no hereditary power in the country; whereas there still is a king in France\*, though not such a king as the nobility or clergy can look up to for much emolument. Mr. Burn can see no medium, at least in me, between retrenching exorbitant power, and taking it away entirely. At all events, I must be represented as a republican; and with many republicanism is synonymous to every thing that is dreadful and de-

\* This was written before the revolution of the 10th of August, which, in the circumstances of France, was a happy and necessary completion of that of the 14th of July.

testable,

testable, perfect anarchy and confusion, to say the least.

It is generally deemed fair to interpret particular expressions in one part of any person's writings by his declared sentiments in others of them. Now in my political writings, which however are not numerous, I have again and again praised the English constitution, as consisting of the three estates of King, Lords, and Commons. What candour or justice, then, is there in supposing that I wish the subversion of it? I thought it necessary to premise these observations, which demonstrate a disposition in Mr. Burn and the clergy of Birmingham, with whose concurrence he wrote, to put the worst construction on every thing I say or do, which, if I may adopt their language, is an outrage on character similar to that which the rioters committed on my property.

Let us now come to the examination of the *facts* which I have advanced, the evidence for which is so loudly called for by Mr. Burn. And surely, if there be any thing wrong in producing this evidence, that is, what I take to be such, the blame must lie with those who called for it. With respect to accusation unsupported by facts, Mr. Burn expresses himself very properly, though without reflecting to whom his censure applies. "If a character," p. 26, "must  
at

“ at any rate be defamed, nothing in the world can  
“ be so convenient for the purpose of invented cal-  
“ lumny, as an appeal to anonymous report. The  
“ introduction of anonymous report,” p. 25, “ whe-  
“ ther true or false, into this serious argument, is  
“ more than impertinent; it is insidious.”

Mr. Burn's challenge of me to produce authorities for what I have advanced is such as becomes a diligent inquirer after truth, and one who would not shrink from it. “ If,” says he, p. 26, “ the  
“ doctor would convict by evidence, we invite him  
“ to the proof of his charge. Let him,” p. 59,  
“ produce instances from the conduct of the upper  
“ class of people, whom he thus gravely accuses.  
“ He is, no doubt, in possession of the facts.” With  
respect to what I said of some of them being concerned in the insults offered to me, he says, p. 35,  
“ Let him then come fairly to the proof, or let  
“ him expunge all illiberal insinuations from the  
“ list of his charges.” When I said that the clearest facts shew that there was more than remissness on the part of many persons of better condition, and that nothing they did shewed a real disapprobation of the conduct of the mob previous to the destruction of my house, Mr. Burn says, p. 67, “ Then  
“ produce them. On this subject,” he says, p. 95,  
“ be explicit, sir;” and “ of this assertion he produces no evidence.” This is the most material article in the question that is now before the Public,



and therefore I shall endeavour to do what Mr. Burn challenges me to do, viz. to support what I have advanced, by an appeal to facts.

Mr. Burn insults me, p. 81, with not having "proceeded against the magistrates legally, but "contented myself with venting my spleen in to-  
"lerated slander." But the history of the assizes at Worcester and Warwick, and of what passed in the House of Commons itself, will, I hope, justify us in not appealing to the laws of our country in such a case as this. Though, however, we have no prospect of success *there*, we shall venture to appeal to a higher and more respectable tribunal, "our countrymen "in general," as Mr. Burn quotes my own words in his motto, "the world at large, and especially "posterity."

I have not, in my Appeal, said much of the conduct of the clergy of Birmingham: Mr. Burn, however, supposes that I have; and on that supposition he says, p. 103, "Dr. Priestley  
"stands forward as the accuser of the clergy of  
"Birmingham, and he is now called upon as pub-  
"licly by one of that body, either to substantiate, or  
"retract, his charge. The author of this reply," he says, p. 103, "will not shrink from the inquiry.  
"He invites it. If there be any one motive that  
"influences him more than another in this affair,  
"it is the hope that, by promoting this discussion,  
"in



“ in vindication of the character of the innocent, he  
“ may at the same time assist Dr. Priestley and the  
“ Public, in a clear and full detection of the guilty.”  
I shall be much obliged to him for this assistance.

With respect to what I have said of the passions of the lower order of the people being inflamed by the preaching of the clergy, Mr. Burn says, p. 38, “ We do aver from our own practice, from the  
“ practice of our brethren in general, prior to the  
“ late unhappy affair, that this representation of the  
“ conduct of the clergy is not a true one. For the  
“ truth of this declaration we can cheerfully appeal  
“ to the constant experience of our hearers.” This is sufficiently bold; and I shall answer the challenge, not by appealing to Mr. Burn’s hearers, but to printed documents, sermons preached at the time, and now extant. *Litera scripta manet.*

Thus publicly and boldly called upon, I shall proceed to the vindication of what I have advanced in my Appeal; first with respect to what passed previous to the riot, and the probable cause of it; then what took place during the riot, and subsequent to it. I only request an impartial attention to such facts as I shall produce; and it must be considered that, not having been myself a witness of what I shall relate, I must necessarily depend upon the testimony of others; and as in this I may,

through misinformation, be mistaken, I sincerely wish to hear what may be alleged on the other side. I cannot wish to be misled myself, nor would I knowingly mislead others; and the press is as open to my opponents as it is to myself. After this it will be in the power of our readers to judge whether I be what Mr. Burn, p. 106, calls me, "a public slanderer," or not.

### SECTION III.

*Of Events previous to the Riot, and of the more distant Causes of it.*

**T**HAT there existed in Birmingham, and in all that part of the country, a strong spirit of party, exceedingly unfavourable to Dissenters, is evident from a variety of circumstances; and, independently of any that I have mentioned, it must appear probable from the history of those counties in this respect, given at length in an excellent pamphlet lately published, entitled, *HIGH CHURCH POLITICS*, in which it is shewn that the neighbourhood of Birmingham was the head quarters of Dr. Sacheverell; and that, in the reign of George I. several meeting houses were destroyed by rioters

rioters in that town, and others in those parts. The facts that I mentioned in proof of the existence of this party spirit, and that it was far from originating with me, or being promoted by me, Mr. Burn has attempted to invalidate. But let the reader judge with what effect.

One of the instances that I mentioned was that the clergy refused to walk in funeral processions with dissenting ministers. I observed that Mr. Curtis refused to do so at the application of Mr. Scholefield. This Mr. Burn insinuates was not on account of his objecting to doing this with dissenting ministers in general, or Mr. Scholefield in particular, but with myself only; "left," as he says, p. 4, "he should be led to act officially with one whose opposition to the doctrines and discipline of the church of which he is a member, had carried him into excesses, in his apprehension, in the highest degree illiberal and indecent. Of this class he justly considered Dr. Priestley. With him therefore he could not consistently act upon such an occasion; and for this reason solely he refused to comply in the instance produced by the Doctor."

But this instance of bigotry in the clergy of Birmingham appeared before I went thither. More than forty years ago Mr. Wearden, curate of St. Philip's, expressed his concern that he could not walk with



Mr. Blythe at the funeral of Mr. Russel's grandmother, having, as he said, received orders to the contrary from Mr. Vyse, who was then the rector.

In 1770, Mr. Dovey, rector of St. Martin's, refused to go into a mourning coach along with Mr. Blythe at the funeral of Mrs. Webster; and after the funeral he said to Mr. Webster, that "when the Dissenters wished their own ministers to attend their friends to the grave, they had better not invite the clergy of the establishment."

After this Mr. Webster, having the direction of the funeral of Mr. Haddock, omitted to invite Mr. Dovey, and also to send the hatband, scarf, and gloves, which it had been usual to give the attending clergyman. Unwilling to lose these perquisites, Mr. Dovey sent to inform Mr. Webster, that, though he did not choose to attend the funeral along with the Dissenting ministers, he did not mean to refuse what was usually given on those occasions. Mr. Webster, however, very properly withheld them.

At the funeral of Mr. Stephens of Deretend, Mr. Austed refused to ride before the hearse along with the dissenting minister, and haughtily bade him ride behind the hearse.

At the funeral of Mr. Gisborne, when Mr. Dovey refused



refused to walk in procession with Mr. Bourn, a man of activity and spirit, the following pleasant circumstance happened: Mr. Dovey meeting the corpse, and finding Mr. Bourn walking before it, directed him to walk behind. Mr. Bourn not complying with this order, Mr. Dovey endeavoured to outwalk him, but Mr. Bourn, being as nimble as he, kept up with him, till, the Rector quickening his pace, they both fairly ran for it, till they got to the church door. Mr. Dovey was so much offended, that, after the funeral, his pride getting the better of every other consideration, he sent back the hatband and scarf, and even the pins that had been used on the occasion.

These instances certainly show that the refusal of the clergy of Birmingham to walk in funeral procession with dissenting ministers did not arise from any objection they had to myself in particular, as Mr. Burn intimates; but from an absurd bigotry of long standing in the place; and I believe hardly known in any other part of the kingdom.

Besides, if Mr. Curtis had so violent an objection to myself in particular, why did he come to hear me preach, or meet me at the committee of the library, of that for the abolition of the slave trade, and on other occasions, on which he always behaved to me with great civility? And at the time that he refused to walk with Mr. Scholefield, which, Mr. Burn says, was solely on my account, he gave a reason which

affected all dissenting ministers; and I had not then done any thing to make myself more obnoxious than I had when he came to hear me. I am also credibly informed that Mr. Curtis himself, on reading my Appeal, declared that I had given a just account of his conduct, that it was the bigotry he found in the place that led him to act as he had done, and that he had not himself any objection to walking with dissenting ministers at funerals. How this is to be reconciled with his giving his sanction to Mr. Burn's Reply is no business of mine.

Another instance of the High Church bigotry of the town of Birmingham that I mentioned, was the subscribers to the Sunday schools having rescinded a law which permitted the children to go to any place of public worship that their parents chose. On this Mr. Burn says, p. 66, "It has happened, "unfortunately for his purpose, that either through "misinformation, or a settled plan of perverting and "rendering odious the conduct of others," (and this is the turn that Mr. Burn generally chooses to give to all my accounts of things) "he has totally "misrepresented this plain business. The fact," he says, p. 81, "was that the law was never rescinded "at all;" and after giving a detail of pretended proofs to the contrary, he says, p. 12, "Let Dr. "Priestley, by facts, confute this statement if he "can." He also says, p. 9, "To rescind the above "law, was an act for which no committee was com-  
petent

"petent, and there, unquestionably, never was a general meeting held for any such purpose." Mr. Riland, another clergyman, says, p. 106, "I have no doubt but that your representation" (writing to Mr. Burn) "is perfectly right, and his" (mine) "is totally wrong."

Though this reply of Mr. Burn was written with the concurrence of Mr. Curtis, it is now clearly proved that my account is strictly true. A general meeting of the subscribers to the Sunday schools was held (though Mr. Burn says there unquestionably was not) without any previous notice of the business that was to come before them. When it was proposed to rescind the law, the votes were equal, and Mr. Curtis, being in the chair, decided in favour of rescinding it. The evidence of the rescinding is a public advertisement in the Birmingham newspaper, immediately after the transaction, as was noticed by Mr. Scholefield, with proper observations with respect to the dependance there could be on other bold assertions in Mr. Burn's reply. This will be found in my Appendix, No. I.

I do not say that even this palpable falsehood was a wilful one, as Mr. Burn, or Mr. Madan, would not scruple to say with respect to me; but it argues such a defect of memory as may be hereafter quoted as one of the most remarkable things of this nature in the history of the human mind. It is the  
more



more so, as, when Mr. Burn himself applied to Mr. John Lawrence for his subscription, and was refused on account of the rescinding of the rule above mentioned, Mr. Burn immediately said to a person who accompanied him, "I told you how it would be. I am sorry for it;" he himself having disapproved of the conduct of the High Church party in this business. Indeed I never considered Mr. Burn as a bigot; and, as having been both a Methodist and a Dissenter, rather a friend to both. The fact above-mentioned was related to me by Mr. Lawrence presently after it happened.

The defect in the memory of Mr. Curtis is as remarkable as that of Mr. Burn; and that two men should labour under the same defect, with respect to the same thing, is more extraordinary still. For he was not only chairman at the meeting in which the rule was rescinded, and decided the question himself; but when, after this, he called upon Mr. Punfield for his subscription, he was refused, and was informed that it was for the same reason.

That this conduct in the subscribers to the Sunday schools arose from the most contemptible bigotry, no person of the least degree of liberality will deny; and that this bigotry was of long standing in Birmingham, in the opinion of Mr. Curtis himself, was evident from the following circumstance, which I shall relate from my own recollection. When a friend



friend of mine was going to that meeting of the subscribers, at which it was agreed to permit the scholars to attend whatever place of worship their parents should choose, he was joined by Mr. Curtis; and talking about the business of the meeting, Mr. Curtis, who was then a friend to the proposal, said he was afraid they should not be able to carry it; "there was so much of the *old leaven* yet remaining in Birmingham." I have no doubt but Mr. Curtis would have acted with the liberality becoming a person of a dissenting family, if he had not found so much of what he properly termed the *old leaven* in Birmingham. That he had not the fortitude to act agreeably to the natural dictates of his own mind, by which it would have been in his power to expel that old leaven, is much to be lamented. My house and meeting house would have been standing, and I should now have been at Birmingham, much more agreeably employed than I am at this moment.

When Mr. Scholefield published a copy of the resolution of the subscribers to the Sunday schools rescinding the rule above mentioned, and which Mr. Burn, Mr. Riland, and, in effect, Mr. Curtis also (by joining in the sanction of the other clergymen of Birmingham to Mr. Burn's Reply) solemnly declared never to have been rescinded at all; Mr. Burn does not acknowledge the plain inference from the fact, viz. the existence of a spirit of High Church bigotry in Birmingham, independently of any

any thing that I could have done to excite it (and it was with this view that I mentioned it at all) but only desires of his readers, what they would certainly do without his desire, that "that part of his statement, &c. may not be considered as weighing any thing in his general argument against me." What was it but a degree of bigotry of the most extravagant kind to rescind a rule by which the scholars were permitted to attend public worship where their parents chose, when in no one instance had any of them, in fact, attended any other worship than that of the Church of England.

The bigotry of the church people at Birmingham appears, perhaps, more clearly in their conduct of a charity school which has been established there upwards of forty years; not only as it is a rule in the institution of this school, that no children shall be admitted that are not of the established church, but that they shall not be bound apprentices to any Dissenter. Nay, in two instances, the managers of this charity even refused to accept of the subscriptions of Dissenters voluntarily offered them. Both Mr. Lakin and Mr. Peyton, to their great surprise, had their money rejected.

I consider it as a proof of High Church principles, unfavourable to civil and religious liberty, that the centenary celebration of the revolution in 1688, was not attended by any of the clergy of Birmingham,

ham, and they did every thing in their power to render it unpopular. Their favourite toast of *Church and King* was objected to. The meeting was attended by a Catholic clergyman, and the Dissenting ministers.

The last instance I shall mention of the existence of a high party spirit in the clergy of Birmingham is, that one of that body, of a more liberal turn, when he left the place, declared it was on that account, and that for this reason he could not live in comfort in it.

This extreme bigotry is not peculiar to the town of Birmingham, but extends to the neighbouring counties. As a curious instance of this, I shall observe, that Mr. Mould, of Measham, near Ashby de la Zouch, refused, the last year, to officiate at the funeral of a child of John Bancroft, a Dissenter; and declared, that no Dissenter should be buried by him. In consequence of this, the child was put into the grave without any thing being said at the place; and the mother was so much affected, that she was taken home very ill. It is happy that this clergyman has not the keys of the gates of heaven, nor wholly those of the grave.

That I saw, lamented, and endeavoured to allay, this party spirit in the town of Birmingham, by persuading the Dissenters to give up the disposal of the civil  
offices



offices, is well known to all my acquaintance, though Mr. Burn is incredulous on the subject. "This," he says, p. 16, in his insulting manner, "considering the Doctor's natural diffidence of power, and the extreme readiness which himself and principal friends have ever discovered in giving up authority once obtained, must appear a very probable, as well as interesting story. It is, however, strictly true. To mention no more, Mr. Ruffel, Mr. G. Humphrys, the two Mr. Hunts, and the three Mr. Rylands, who thought as I did on the subject, will bear me witness, as well as others, who were not Dissenters. I may add all my particular acquaintance, without exception, know that I constantly blamed the Dissenters for keeping that power in their own hands.

That the Dissenters of Birmingham were not so attentive as they might have been to retain the power they once had, appeared in their conduct with respect to king Edward's charity school in that town; the governors of which were once Dissenters, and it was in their power to have admitted no other among them; but they always chose to take some of the principal of the church people to act with them. It happened, however, that at one particular meeting, at which those church people made a point of attending, while some of the Dissenters were absent, they took that opportunity of choosing another churchman, by which they became the majority; and from that time, except in the single case of Mr. Ruffel, they



they have never chosen any Dissenter into their body, and have repeatedly declared they never would. Let not then the church people at Birmingham upbraid the Dissenters with a love of power.

I had a view to the bigotry of the town of Birmingham, and hoped to succeed in allaying it, by means of the public library, in the establishment of which I particularly interested myself; as that would necessarily bring the reading and thinking part of the town better acquainted with each other. The annual advertisement, which was drawn up by me, and which was continued for some time by the High Church party, after they gained the ascendancy they now have in that library, but which they have since dropped, I shall insert in the Appendix, No. II.

With respect to the business of the library, in which it was not possible for any man to act with more liberality than I did, Mr. Burn says, p. 14, "We never saw great talents so degraded by party considerations as in the conduct of Dr. Priestley in some part of that business." But, in his usual manner, he does not say what those parts of my conduct were. As a small pamphlet, which I published on occasion of a motion to prevent the purchase of books of religious controversy, will give the reader some idea of the spirit with which I acted in this business, I shall give the whole, or a considerable part of it, in the Appendix, No. III.; and let

Mr.

Mr. Burn, if he pleases, republish the pamphlet which one of the clergy wrote on the occasion, and signed M. S.

What it is that Mr. Burn alludes to, when he says that I degraded my great talents, I believe it will not be very easy for any person, acquainted with the facts, to conjecture. Had I, as Mr. Curtis did, openly canvassed the subscribers for the purpose of getting a committee to my mind, I should indeed have degraded my talents, whether they had been great or small; but it is well known that all my proceedings were fair and candid. The harshest thing that I said of the clergy who withdrew from the library because my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* was voted into it, was that their conduct was childish. The subscribers seem to have thought as I did; for though Mr. Curtis, in the note he wrote on the occasion, expressed his wish, "that all the members of the church of England would follow his example;" not one of them, except the clergy, did so.

Another childish and paltry instance of bigotry, in some members of the church of England on that occasion, was striking out the title of *Reverend* prefixed to Mr. Scholefield's name and mine in the list of the committee. A subscriber found the ink with which the rasure had been made, not quite dry; and inquiring who had been in the library, was informed that only Mr. Curtis and Mr. Lloyd, a Quaker,

Quaker, had been there. Being interrogated on the subject, they both denied having done it. If notwithstanding this, Mr. Curtis was generally believed to have done it, the fault is not mine. As little regard has been paid to his most solemn asseveration by Dr. Parr, a brother clergyman.

Without the least regard to truth Mr. Burn speaks of me, p. 21, as having been "adopted the champion and leader of the whole body," (viz. of Dissenters), "in the business of the application to parliament for the repeal of the corporation and test acts;" and he adds, that "after organizing the whole body of Dissenters, and bringing them to act as one man, their future conduct in this affair was to be governed, as unquestionably it has been, and especially in this, and the neighbouring counties, by the maxims of his policy."

In all this Mr. Burn shews his utter ignorance of this whole business; and, though he pays no regard to what I have before said on this subject, viz. that I had very little to do in it, he should have procured information from some other quarter, and have mentioned his authority. Of the many *letters, resolutions, &c.* relating to this affair, that were drawn up at Birmingham, I did not write one. I attended but few of the meetings even there, and though I attended one at Nottingham, it was because I had business of my own in that place. I assisted, indeed, in drawing up the resolutions that were agreed

D

upon



upon there, but said little or nothing at the meeting. Indeed, it is well known that I am very backward to speak in public; being, on several accounts, especially a tendency to stammering, unfit for public speaking.

On the failure of this application to parliament, Mr. Burn says, p. 18, "Circumstances did arise which tended extremely to expose the true temper and views of Dr. Priestley, and to sink him prodigiously in the opinion of his townsmen." I wish Mr. Burn had said what those circumstances were, and I now call upon him to name them. I had no views that were peculiar to myself, or that were not common to all Dissenters; and what I did to promote those views was nothing peculiar to myself, and less than was done by many others; not a hundredth part, I may venture to say, of what was done, and ably done, by Mr. Walker of Nottingham, not to speak of others. Indeed, it is well known that I was never solicitous about the object. But it is Mr. Burn's manner to make general assertions without appealing to any specific facts, capable of being scrutinized.

The discourse which I preached and published on this occasion I called "the most calm and moderate that ever was written on a political subject." This Mr. Burn does not deny; but as nothing good can come from me, he gives it the following turn, p. 23. "They perceived, indeed, that his gird at the  
" minister



“ minister had taught him circumspection, and that  
“ his wounds received in the encounter being  
“ yet fresh, he fought cautiously; but the true de-  
“ sign of this piece of management was too pal-  
“ pable to be mistaken.” In this he alludes to my  
*Letter to Mr. Pitt*, by which that minister might  
receive a wound, but it will not be easy to find the  
scars of any that I received. If I had wounds, they  
did not prevent my continuing to fight on (if I  
must pursue Mr. Burn’s metaphor) and what I  
wrote afterwards in my *Answer to Mr. Burke*, and  
my *Familiar Letters*, betray no diminution of vigour  
or spirit. But that the temper with which I deli-  
vered and published that sermon was not artfully  
assumed for the occasion, as Mr. Burn insinuates,  
but habitual to me, will appear from what I wrote  
respecting the same subject in one of the earliest of  
my publications, viz. my *Address to Protestant Dis-*  
*senters as such*, a part of which I shall for this  
purpose insert in my Appendix, No. IV.

Mr. Burn would in vain charge *me* with even  
alluding to facts that I am not prepared to authen-  
ticate. With respect to the report of my convert-  
ing Silas Dean to atheism, Mr. Burn says, p. 26,  
“ Will he oblige the public with the names of some  
“ of those clergymen in the town and neighbour-  
“ hood by whom this account was so industriously  
“ circulated?” Now I doubt not Mr. Burn knows  
much more of this business than I do. I will men-

tion, however, that Mr. Swainson of Rowley, and a clergyman dining at Stratford, both strongly recommended the pamphlet in which that story was published, as did Mr. Curtis at the library room in Birmingham. The person who heard him is ready to attest it.

Let the reader judge from these particulars whether I have given a false account of the temper of the members of the established church in Birmingham in general, or of that of the clergy in particular. It was the extreme of bigotry, the same that had existed in the place long before I went thither, what I in vain endeavoured to allay, what exists there at present in as great violence as ever, and will I fear continue a long time; for it appears to have been greatly inflamed by the late riot.

#### SECTION IV.

##### *Of the predisposing Causes of the Riot.*

I CONSIDER the view that was perpetually exhibited of the Dissenters, and especially of the Unitarians in general, and of myself in particular, by the clergy of Birmingham, and others who occasionally preached in their pulpits, as a principal predisposing cause of the riot; as they necessary led the people to consider us as the very pests of society;  
from

from which the wish, and the endeavour, to exterminate us, as such, was but too obvious and natural. Mr. Burn, in what I have already quoted from him, strongly denies the fact. But there is evidence of it now existing in the printed sermons of Dr. Croft and Mr. Madan, which are well known to have been in the same strain with many others delivered in the pulpits at Birmingham while I resided there; and it will not be supposed that what they have printed was less guarded than what was not.

Mr. Madan, who says that his discourse was published "at the request of many before whom it was delivered," which is a proof of *their* party spirit, as well as of his own, speaks with particular approbation of the sermons of Dr. Croft, and Mr. Clutton; the latter of which he laments was not printed, and which I remember to have heard spoken of as peculiarly violent; as the sermons of Mr. Curtis were also said to be. The reader may therefore judge of the inflammatory tendency of these sermons of the clergy in general, by the following extracts from those of Dr. Croft and Mr. Madan.

They both agree in representing the principles of the Dissenters as "unquestionably republican." "Those of the Socinians," which Mr. Madan speaks of as evidently gaining ground, he says, p. 10, "are certainly no less dangerous to the state than the tenets of popery." Both these preachers re-



present our principles as not only theoretically, but practically seditious. Of the sentiments of Dr. Price, Dr. Croft says, p. xii. "They spread jealousy and discontent through the kingdom, and were little short of blasphemy. The Dissenters," he says, p. 33, "wish to destroy the whole fabric of our constitution." Mr. Madan also represents us as no better than *king killers* in general. "Is there no reason," he says, p. 13, "to receive with suspicion their declarations of reverence to the government, and of loyalty to the king, however plausibly and spontaneously announced, when the amount of that reverence has been exactly ascertained by the woful experience of republican tyranny, and the extent of their loyalty has been exactly delineated by the blood of a king." He also says, p. 8, that he "always regarded our principles as pointedly hostile, and dangerous to our happy constitution."

When he was called upon by me to defend these strange and injurious aspersions, which are in contradiction to all history, and even to recent facts, and especially to all my principles, as contained in my writings; he appeared willing, indeed, to except from his charges the more moderate, or Calvinistic Dissenters, but by no means myself, and others whom he terms "the more violent Dissenters;" and in vindication of what he had advanced concerning the king killing principles being still retained by the Dissenters,



Dissenters, he says, p. 35, that "principles are a long lived generation;" and insinuates that therefore, they must now exist somewhere among us. "These principles," he says, p. 22, "are still at work." When I appealed to my own peaceable behaviour, he replied, p. 16, that "Guy Fawkes would have done the same;" plainly suggesting a comparison between him and me.

Both Dr. Croft and Mr. Madan represent in a most extravagant light the very innocent object of the application of the Dissenters to parliament for the repeal of the corporation and test acts, and they intimate, that so far from giving us more liberty, it were to be wished that we could be deprived of some of the privileges that we now enjoy. Mr. Madan alarms the public by calling the business of this application a "great constitutional cause." The possession of offices, which we plead our right to a participation in, he says, p. 12, would be "incompatible with the safety of our civil government;" and he speaks of our third application as "an extraordinary subject, now a third time obtruded upon the legislature."

Dr. Croft says, p. 36, "It would be fatal to religion, if the legislature should by any act of indulgence declare all opinions innocent. It is unfortunate," he says, p. xiv. "that the right of voting at elections, and of sitting in parliament, can-

“ not be taken from the Dissenters. It would be  
 “ desirable,” p. 30, “ to exclude from the British  
 “ senate all those who are led away by their plausible  
 “ arguments, and to caution every British youth  
 “ against their civil and religious maxims of go-  
 “ vernment.” He particularly says, p. xi. that  
 “ if the Unitarians were restricted from speaking in-  
 “ decently of the doctrine of the Trinity, and if they  
 “ were enjoined upon certain pains and penalties, it  
 “ might be deemed persecution by them, but could  
 “ not be thought a hardship by others.” Mr. Ma-  
 dan also says, p. 9, “ Are we not justly upbraided  
 “ with a passive and supine conduct, in a cause of  
 “ the most interesting and sacred nature ?”

Of my own character nothing more injurious  
 could be insinuated than was done by Mr. Madan.  
 He describes me as a man of extraordinary talents,  
 indeed, but as actuated by *malevolence*; and how else  
 would he have described Satan himself? “ When  
 “ I see,” he says, p. 26, “ your blindness in any  
 “ point of history, I much suspect it to be wilful;”  
 which is to represent the worst principle of my  
 conduct as, in all cases, more probable than any  
 other. What must the inhabitants of Birming-  
 ham, who justly respected Mr. Madan more than  
 any other clergyman in the town, think of the Dis-  
 senters in general, and of myself in particular, when  
 we were described in this manner, and when the ac-  
 count was introduced with such uncommon solemnity,

p. 2, as given "from the settled principles of his heart, as he hoped for mercy from the God of truth?"

To what can we compare this conduct of the clergy, but (to adopt that metaphor of mine which has been so much carped at, and misrepresented,) laying gunpowder, not grain by grain, but by handfuls, in that magazine which exploded on the 14th of July? For what outrage must not many of the common people, who read none of my writings, but heard them spoken of by the clergy as highly dangerous, and unfit to be read by them, have been prepared, when for years together they heard the Unitarian Dissenters in general, and myself in particular, pointed at as the enemies of their country, ready on the first opportunity to overturn the government under which we lived, and even to embroe our hands in the blood of our sovereign? Could they help concluding that the persons who described us in this manner wished to have us destroyed, that it was even meritorious to destroy us; and when in any case the *end* is thought to be just in itself, the propriety of the *means* will be less attended to? If violence be employed to gain any end, there are thousands in all parts of this country ready to join in it, without any regard to the end, but merely for the sake of mischief and plunder. It is an army ready to act on the side of any whom they think they can serve with impunity to themselves.



It is; therefore, in this sense, though in this only, that I accuse the clergy of Birmingham, and especially Mr. Madan, as having been the promoters of the riot; and if it should terminate in that destruction with which I am still threatened, I shall charge them with being the cause of my death.

The methods that were taken to excite the populace of Birmingham against the Dissenters, previous to the riot, were various, and but too successful. Among others, I shall only mention one, as a specimen of ingenuity as well as of the malignant party spirit, which prevailed in the place, while nothing was done by us but what was calculated to allay it. The following paper was much circulated in Birmingham two years before the riot.

"To those factious and republican spirits, who are at this time insidiously endeavouring to undermine the grand bulwark of our most excellent constitution, a plate of their *Coat of Arms* is dedicated, by a friend to church and king.

"*Blazoning of the Dissenters Coat of Arms.*

"Field sable. A dissenting magistrate sits with a table before him, holding in his right hand a pen, in his left hand a serpent. On his shoulder sits a toad dictating to him. Over his head is a pair of scales broken, Or within, and argent. One



“ hornet and six wasps, representing the seven united  
“ congregations. Crest, the head of Janus, party  
“ per pale, sable, and or, before a thorn and a thistle,  
“ issuing proper. Motto. *To him we owe our power.*

“ *Supporters.*”

“ Fraud represented with the body of a woman,  
“ with a double face young and old, presenting the  
“ most fascinating to the unwary objects her prey.  
“ Her attributes are an angle rod, with a fish caught,  
“ and in her left a serpent. She is always described  
“ with the legs and claws of a vulture, and the tail  
“ of a scorpion. Deceit is represented by an elder-  
“ ly matron gayly dressed, holds a mask before her  
“ face, and on her breast two hearts, black and red,  
“ denoting the necessity of an external appearance  
“ to cover the designs of a corrupt mind.”

N. B. There is some incorrectness in this copy;  
but I have not seen any other.

#### SECTION V.

*Circumstances previous to the Riot, and more im-  
mediately connected with the Cause of it.*

SEVERAL circumstances, previous to  
the riot, show that some such thing was ex-  
pected by the High Church party, while no Dis-  
senter, though exposed to the mischief, apprehended  
any such matter. A clergyman dining at the An-  
chor, at Worcester, July 13, said that, “ If there was  
“ any

“ any dinner at Birmingham the next day, some-  
 “ thing would shew itself at night, and that it was  
 “ then brewing.” A person of Birmingham said, ]  
 “ there will be the devil to pay at the Hotel to-  
 “ day. There are about two hundred Presbyte-  
 “ rians met there, but we are ready for them, and  
 “ shall be their masters yet.”

Mr. Burn represents the dinner at the Hotel, and the hand-bill, published a few days before, as the true causes of the riot. “ The promoters of the dinner,” he says, p. 51, “ were chiefly Dissenters; and as the design of that meeting was strongly suspected, those gentlemen became the object of popular resentment.” But that both the dinner and the hand-bill, were the mere pretences for the violences that were committed, is evident from the cry of the time, which had no relation to the dinner. Had the sufferers been obnoxious as having been concerned in the dinner, those of the church of England, who joined in it, would have been doubly so, as men who had deserted their friends, and joined their enemies; but no member of the establishment, though present at the dinner, suffered at all; and the only sufferers were that very description of men against whom the popular resentment had been excited several years before, viz. the Unitarian Dissenters in general, and myself in particular, whether we were present at the dinner, or concerned in promoting it, or not.

Of the principal sufferers, who were ten in all, only three were at the dinner, and their houses were the last that were destroyed. On these striking facts no comment favourable to Mr. Burn's hypothesis can be made.

Mr. Burn says, p. 52, that "the effect which the  
" hand-bill might produce on the lower orders,  
" was very justly and seriously apprehended." Now it is to the last degree improbable that any serious effect was ever apprehended from it. All that it invited to was the celebration of the French Revolution; yet he strangely says, p. 47, "The object of it  
" was, in the apprehension of the populace, nothing  
" less than the immediate overthrow both of Church  
" and State." This famous hand-bill is still extant, and has been published a thousand times more by the enemies of the Dissenters than by their friends; and if it had really been calculated to do much mischief, it must have appeared long before this time.

At any time before the riot it was exceedingly difficult for any Dissenter to procure a copy of the hand-bill, while it was circulated with great industry among church people. If the magistrates really apprehended a riot from the effects, either of the hand-bill, which few Dissenters had seen, or from the dinner, which, however, few proposed to attend, why did they not prepare to oppose it by swearing more  
constables,



constables, and using other precautions directed in the Riot Act?

If the governors of this country had really thought this hand-bill capable of doing any harm, would they not have sent soldiers to Birmingham, to be in readiness for the occasion? A copy of the hand-bill was in the secretary of state's office three days before the dinner, and that was time enough for the purpose. Would it have been published at full length in the Gazette? Or would Mr. Dundas have recited it in the House of Commons? This publication, and many other publications of it, clearly shews that no body ever apprehended any danger from it, and that the stir that was made about it was only to throw an odium upon Dissenters, who were represented as the authors of it.

A letter of Dr. Tatham's, in which the anniversary of the French Revolution was called an *illegal and unconstitutional act*, and which was eagerly circulated in Birmingham before the dinner, contributed much more to the riot than this hand-bill.

The suspicion of the fabrication of this hand-bill has now generally fallen upon the person alluded to by Mr. Burn and Mr. Dundas. It is well known to all our friends that I had no connexion with that person, and that he was least of all likely to be governed



verned by my advice. This, however, I will say for him, that though he thought freely on the subjects of government and religion, he was as far from any thing properly seditious as Mr. Burn himself. I believe him to be an honest and well meaning man, though I never thought him the most prudent. It is to the disgrace of this country that such a person was under the necessity of leaving it.

At the time of my writing the Appeal, I had not the least suspicion of this person being the author of the hand-bill, and, therefore, thought it as probable that it might be written by some of the High Church party, for the use that they actually made of it, as by the Dissenters who suffered in consequence of it. And certainly, they who forged letters for the purpose of exciting the rioters to do us mischief, were *capable* of doing *this* with the same view. The one was not more wicked than the other. Admitting, however, that a Dissenter wrote this celebrated hand-bill, and that it was as heinous a thing as our enemies represent it; it was only the work of one man, for whose conduct no other person is responsible. No person concerned in the dinner had the least knowledge or suspicion of it at the time, as appears by their public advertisement.

Depending upon such accounts as were given me, with respect to transactions at which I could not be present myself, I had said that, besides the dinner at  
the

the Hotel, there were other dinners on that day, of persons of better condition, who did not rise so soon, or so sober, as those who celebrated the French Revolution, and that the riot commenced at the breaking up of these companies. "This," says Mr. Burn, p. 58, "is, to say the least, an idle fiction." "The magistrates," he says, 59, "dined at one of our inns on that day, and for the express purpose of being on the spot, in case their interference should be found necessary, in order to keep the peace."

Now I do not find, on farther inquiry, that there was more than one such dinner as I have described, viz. of *persons of better condition*, the rest being of the lower orders, though not all of the lowest, whose assembling, whose horrid execrations, and whose intoxication, Mr. Burn cannot deny. But that the other dinner, though attended by the magistrates, answers sufficiently to my description, there is evidence enough.

The High Church party who dined at the Swan tavern in Bull-street, if I be not misinformed, used the most horrid execrations, drank damnation to the Presbyterians, and prophesied what dreadful havoc would be made. A person who heard this persuaded those who dined at the Hotel to disperse; and then returning to the company at the Swan, said, "Gentlemen, your sport is spoiled, the company is breaking up;" and this seemed to mortify them exceedingly.

That

That the magistrates themselves, and no doubt other persons of their party, were either intoxicated, or worse, at the breaking up of this meeting, the facts I shall presently relate abundantly prove. If they seriously meant to *keep the peace*, their measures were very ill laid, and certainly had no success. To pretend that they feared a riot from the friends of the revolution dinner is too absurd to be alleged. They were not of that class of people; and there was no dinner, or preparations for any dinner, except at the hotel.

Among other circumstances that indicated a design in the High Church party to promote a riot, I mentioned a report of some shops being shut up, that the workmen might be at liberty for that purpose. Of this Mr. Burn says, p. 51, "If any instance of the kind does really exist, it has eluded our research." He adds, that "many churchmen took pains to keep their men in the shops." Of this I have no doubt. The generality of the Church people in Birmingham were far from favouring the rioters, nor have I ever given that idea of them. The promoters of the riot were a few, but certainly all of them churchmen.

The state of the town of Birmingham is still such that it is not easy to procure positive evidence against any rioter, or favourer of the riot; nor can it be deemed extraordinary that I should in some

E

instances



instances have been mislaid by the exaggerated reports of the time, when I wrote my Appeal. Whether, however, I wrote without *some* authority, let the reader judge from the following circumstances. Mr. Russel remonstrating with one of the rioters at his own house, he said, "What would you have us do? We cannot work, for our masters turned us out of the shop on Thursday morning, and declared we should not enter it again all the week." The name of the man was Patric, and he said his master was a buckle-maker.

It is possible also, that the Dissenters might get the idea of the persons excluded from the shops being more numerous than they were, from the following circumstance, viz. that a little after nine o'clock, on the 14th of July, Mr. Carles, after saying to the rioters, "Come, my boys, huzza," added, "if they turn you out of work, I will employ you." What he meant by that language he best knows himself. It is, I own, more probable that his meaning was, that if the Dissenters should turn any persons out of their shops for having been concerned in the riot, he would endeavour to find employment for them.

That too many, though far from the majority of the church people in Birmingham, favoured the riot, and did as much to promote it as the shutting up their shops, though they might not do that specific thing, is sufficiently evident; and therefore *this* could



could not of itself appear improbable; and that great numbers of the common manufacturers were well enough predisposed for the riot is evident from the following circumstance. On the 13th of July a churchman talking about the intended dinner, said, " I have got fifty hands in my shop, and if I was to go to them to-morrow, and say, My lads, your church and king are in danger, they would turn out every man of them, and break every window in the hotel."

Another circumstance that I shall mention is one that I own I do not perfectly understand; but as it has been mentioned as some evidence that even Mr. Curtis himself expected a riot, that in it recourse would be had to fire, and that he did not wish such fire to be soon extinguished, I shall relate it, that Mr. Curtis may have an opportunity of exculpating himself.

The keys of the fire engine were taken by him out of the custody of the person who usually kept them, and delivered to a Mr. Brooke, a clerk in his own church, who, when he was applied to for them, as the rioters were demolishing the old meeting, said, that he had orders to let nobody have them. At length, however, an order was procured from the churchwarden, who expressed much surprise that this should be necessary; when Mr. Brooke (finding that he could not refuse them) said, " If you

“ must have them, you shall, but they will do you  
“ no good;” which was actually the case, the engine not being suffered to play on any but the neighbouring houses.

What makes this story the more extraordinary is, that it appears from Mr. Curtis’s own account that, in the course of that night, the clerk went to the vestry, and there wrote a letter, which he sent by a special messenger to Mr. Curtis, to inform him that, at the order of the churchwardens, he had delivered the keys of the engine. Does not this look like anxiety to make an apology for having done what he knew would not be pleasing to his superior? It behoves Mr. Curtis to explain this extraordinary conduct with respect to the fire engine, with which it does not appear that he had any thing to do.

That something was concerted by the High Church with respect to the Dissenters previous to the dinner is evident from this circumstance, that a Dissenter, but not known to be one by Mr. J. Green, a busy and not very discreet man, going to him about business the day before the riot, received for answer, “ I have not time to settle your account  
“ now, the damned Presbyterians give me so much  
“ trouble. There are gentlemen now at my house  
“ consulting what is to be done with them.”

SECTION VI.

*Circumstances attending the Commencement of the Riot.*

I SHALL now proceed to relate some circumstances which immediately preceded, and accompanied the riot, at its first breaking out; and I think they will sufficiently prove not only that there was no exertion on the part of the magistrates, or any of the principal church people in the town, to prevent the riot; but that, not then knowing how far it would proceed, many of them were well-wishers to it. I may, no doubt, be deceived; but all the particulars that I shall mention have been voluntarily declared upon oath, and the reporters are now ready to attest them in any court of judicature, whenever they are called upon to do it. However, let our enemies have an opportunity of vindicating themselves: they have the same access to the Public that I have, and will have a much more favourable hearing.

When the company were going to the hotel, and the mob were throwing at them, the justices, who were present, took no notice of it, and did not endeavour to disperse them. Between seven and eight o'clock Mr. Carles and Dr. Spencer were in the midst of the mob, in passing from the hotel to-



wards Bull-street, and seemed to encourage them by bowing and nodding to them. When some of the mob came out of the hotel, where they had been to look for those who had dined there, one of the magistrates, standing upon the steps, took off his hat, waved it round his head, and huzza'd with them, but made no attempt to check them for a quarter of an hour, while the witness was with them. When one of them was haranguing the mob on the steps of the hotel, the other stood behind him, laughing heartily, and hiding his face with his hat.

When the windows of the hotel were nearly demolished, one of the justices cried, "Well done, my lads, well done, my lads. We will do what we can for you; and if I had it in my power I would make you all drunk." A little after nine he said to the mob, "Do no mischief, or murder; and if you are taken up in a right cause, and brought before us, we will acquit you:" and he shook hands with several of them. One of the rioters asked the justices, if they would give them leave to shake a little powder out of Dr. Priestley's wig: and to this they made no answer, but laughed, took off their hats, waved them three times, and huzza'd. One of them said, again "You are all hearty fellows; if I had it in my power I would make you all drunk." A boy saying, "Damn them, seize all the Presbyterians," one of them put his hand



on the boy's head, and said, " Well done, my hearty  
" chicken; thou art a damned good cock;" and  
laughed. The mob laughed with him, and huzza'd,  
crying, *Spencer for ever.*

The most serious charge against one of the magistrates is the following: while the rioters were throwing at the windows of the hotel, he said, " My  
" friends, do not revenge yourselves upon this man,  
" who gets his living by making dinners for gentlemen. If you wish to be revenged upon *them*,  
" go to their meetings." On this the mob cried,  
" To the new meeting; the justice will protect us."  
They were so near him, that he must have heard them. A young man of my congregation told me before I left my house, that he was standing close by one of the magistrates when the rioters mentioned going to the new meeting, and that he said nothing to restrain them.

While the same magistrate was walking up Bullstreet some of the rioters followed him, and among them was a woman, who cried, " Damn all the  
" Presbyterians in the town;" but at this the magistrate only laughed. Being incommoded by the crowd, one of the justices bid them not follow him. On this they cried, " Where must we go?" He answered, " Go down to the meeting to the others." They then went to the new meeting, and joined those who were destroying it. He also said to them

at the same time, "Do no other mischief than pulling down the meetings, and I will stand your friend as far as lies in my power." Afterwards, when one of the rioters, who was demolishing the new meeting, was told that he would be hanged for it, he said, "No; for justice Carles sent us down hither."

"It is but justice," says Mr. Burn, p. 121, "to Mr. Brooke, at that time under sheriff, acting with the magistrates, and since deputed by the hundred as their sole solicitor on the trials, to observe, that no individual appears to have risked more by his personal exertions during the riots than himself." I have no objection to admitting this with respect to Mr. Brooke, or any other person, after the riot had proceeded farther than they wished, in consequence of which they might think they had particular reason to be apprehensive for themselves; but the question is, how they behaved at the commencement of the riot; and at that time there is clear evidence of several persons having given them too much encouragement,

The mob being assembled before Mr. Brooke's house, which is very near the hotel, a person in a green coat addressed them in a low voice, desiring them to go from thence, and saying, that if they would go to the new meeting, he would order a hog'shead of ale for them when they came back. They asking

asking him for something in hand, he appeared to give them money, having put his hand into his pocket. Of this circumstance there are two witnesses. But previous to this he asked a young man who was in the crowd, whether he thought they knew him. He then held up his arm, and pointed towards the new meeting, and they immediately cried, "To the new meeting;" whither they went, and in five minutes few were left behind. Before this, when the mob were breaking the windows of the hotel, Mr. Brooke came out of his house, and Mrs. Brooke being apprehensive of some mischief to him, the rioters said, "We will not hurt Mr. Brooke; we will pull down any house Mr. Brooke has a mind." This, however, they might have said with respect to a person with whom they had had no previous communication,

## SECTION VII.

*Of the Conduct of the Magistrates, and others, after the Commencement of the Riot.*

THE facts related in the preceding section sufficiently prove that there was no disposition in the magistrates, or the high church party in general, to check, but rather to promote, the riot at its commencement. Other facts as clearly prove that this disposition continued till the destruction of both  
the



the meeting houses, and of every thing belonging to me. When the rioters proceeded to attack the houses of Mr. Ryland and Mr. Taylor, there is no doubt that the greatest enemies of the Dissenters were alarmed, and wished to suppress the rioters; but having encouraged them before, they were at a loss how to proceed, and at all events were determined not to have recourse to *fire-arms*, though there was no doubt but that *this* would have been effectual in any period of the business. After the positive encouragement given to the rioters, the reason of this conduct was evident,

Several of the circumstances that I shall now mention also clearly shew that the proper object of the riot was *the Dissenters*, and nothing relating to the dinner, or the French revolution. The handbill, also, which had no relation but to the French revolution, would have been as much forgotten as the dinner, had it not been for the idea of its being written by myself or some other Dissenter. Those things had sufficiently answered their purpose, and the mob proceeded on its natural and original principle, the bigotry of the church people against the Dissenters. In what follows I shall first relate the circumstances that respect the conduct of the magistrates, then that of the clergy, and afterwards that of other persons.

About five o'clock in the morning of the 15th, when the rioters were destroying my house, one of  
the

the magistrates rode up to it, raised his arm, and beckoning to them, said, "Come hither, my good hearty boys." When they were gathered round him, he bade them take off their hats, and huzza, which they did, and he did the same several times. He then said, "I commend you for what you have done, and will protect you for it. No fire; re- turn to your work." They huzza'd, and when he was gone, they returned to the house, and continued to demolish it, crying, as my son, who heard them, said, "Spencer for ever." The reason he gave why he would not have them hurt the house was, that it belonged to Mr. Lloyd, a quaker. It had lately belonged to him, but had been sold to Mr. William Humphrys.

Between nine and ten the same day the other magistrate coming along *Dale End* in a chaise, and the people gathering round him, he took off his hat, waved it out of the window, and cried, "*Church and King for ever, my lads.* Be true to your cause; stick to your cause. Be of my determination, to lose the last drop of blood in your bodies: it is my determination to lose the last drop of mine. Do not leave these Presbyterian dogs a place standing." He then huzza'd again, crying, *Church and King*, and the mob did the same. At two o'clock, however, on the same day, when Mr. Ryland's house was burning, he said to the rioters, "You have gone past what you were ordered."

“dered.” Both the magistrates saw a man seized for carrying off three bottles from Mr. Ryland’s house without taking any notice of it; and the man was set at liberty.

That the rioters took it for granted that the magistrates favoured them there can be no doubt; though it is natural to suppose that, liking the business, they would make the most of every circumstance of that kind. Some of the rioters being taken into custody at Hay-hall, the residence of Mr. Smith, others came, as they said, by order of Mr. Carles, to demand their release, saying they did not come to do any damage to the house.

At my house the rioters said, “The justices will protect us; we shall not be hurt; we may do what we please, but not burn the house.” They repeatedly said in the course of that night, “We wish we had the doctor locked up in one of the rooms, we would burn him alive; or if he had come to the hotel, we would have killed him.”

Mr. Carpenter, of Woodrow, at some distance from Birmingham, meeting a party of the rioters who did not know him, said they were going to burn his house by orders from justice Carles. On his remonstrating to them, they persisted in saying they had justice Carles’s orders for it, and down it should come. On Mr. Carpenter applying to Mr,  
Carles



Charles afterwards for the assistance of the soldiers, he insulted him, by asking him if he ever knew an honest Presbyterian on the Lickey? his house being on a hill so called. He was not only refused the soldiers for whom he applied, but could not obtain leave to seize any of the rioters without them.

That the rioters had been led, by some means or other, to imagine that what they did was agreeable to government, is as evident as that they thought they were pleasing the magistrates. Soon after the riot, one man was heard to say to another, "Well, " if any body is hanged for it, the king may fight " for himself another time: for I am sure nobody " else will fight for him." At the time that the rioters were demolishing the old meeting, one of them said to another, " This is not right;" but the other replied, " Nay, but the king has sent us, and " if we do not do it, he will soon lose his crown." On the Saturday, when the rioters were hunting some ducks, and were talking of the soldiers coming, one of them said, " What if they do, they will " not hurt us, as we have been fighting on their " side. The justices are for us. Did you not see " how they laughed?"

That the magistrates were determined not to have recourse to fire arms, though this appeared to be the only effectual method of quelling the mob, was evident from the beginning to the end of the business;

ness; and that they should not have done this, if they had been conscious to themselves that they had given no encouragement to the rioters, I cannot well conceive.

In the afternoon of the fifteenth, Capt. Maxwell proposed to Mr. Carles to collect all the soldiers in the town, and head them himself, saying he had no doubt but that he should be able to put a speedy stop to the riot; but Mr. Carles turned from him with strong marks of disapprobation in his countenance. Mr. Ruffel, as early in the business as possible, applied to Mr. Carles to send for a military force to quell the mob, and likewise proposed to head any number of men furnished with fire arms. He wrote to him to desire that twenty men might be sent to assist in the defence of Mr. Humphrys's house. But no request of this kind was ever listened to, and at twelve o'clock on Saturday he received a note from Mr. Carles, informing him that both himself and Dr. Spencer were determined upon pacific measures. Mr. Hutton's servant having pricked one of the rioters with a bayonet, and the party afterwards coming before the justices, Mr. Carles remarked, and Dr. Spencer acquiesced in it, that he had no right to use arms, except the other person had been armed in the same manner.

That any of the *clergy* of Birmingham had the least concern in the riot, or were at all well-wishers

to

to it, I was far from having any idea at the time of writing my Appeal, though Mr. Burn has more than insinuated this. I only thought they had contributed to raise the spirit which produced the riot. Circumstances have since occurred which, I own, do lead me to think that Mr. Curtis was not wholly innocent. At least, whatever might be his meaning, his behaviour contributed not a little to encourage the rioters. One circumstance I mentioned in a preceding section, and two others I shall recite here.

Being with a party of the rioters opposite to St. Martin's church, he thanked them for what they had done in protecting the church and the king. He then took off his hat, joined in three huzzas, and wished them to follow him, which they did.

On Friday, as the mob were returning from the destruction of Mr. Ryland's house, Mr. Curtis harangued them at the top of Temple Street, saying, "We thank you, my brave fellows, for the zeal you have shown for the church and the king. You have now sufficiently punished your enemies, and we beg you will disperse, and go peaceably about your business." Being thanked for what they had done, they might think that they could not be blamed for doing a little more.

Mr. Curtis, willing to appear friendly to the Dis-



senters, during the riot, now says in Mr. Burn's pamphlet, p. 90, "During the riots my house at Solyhull was open to a Dissenter and his family, and the children of another family were literally clothed by Mrs. Curtis." That Mr. Curtis had a real good will to many individuals among the Dissenters, I have no doubt, and that he wished the destruction of any of us I do not believe.

But there was little to boast of in his conduct in the case to which he refers. The Dissenter that he received into his house was old Mr. Smith of Hay Hall, a man universally respected, and who, I believe, has no enemy; so that he ran no risk in receiving him. Conscious, however, that he himself was not very popular in his parish, and that many persons might wish for a pretence to do him mischief, at Mr. Curtis's own request, Mr. Smith removed to the house of Mr. Eyre, another clergyman of the place, who was ready to run all risques in protecting him. There, and not at Mr. Curtis's, Mr. Smith slept; and the next day, to the great concern of Mr. Eyre, Mr. Smith was induced, from the alarm of the neighbours, to remove.

As to Mrs. Curtis literally clothing the children of a family of Dissenters, I have no doubt of her readiness to do it in a case of real charity. But it will not be supposed that, in *this* case, she could look  
for

for no recompense except *at the resurrection of the just*, when it is known that these children were those of Mr. Taylor. They had gone out during the riot with the maid servant who attended them, and were brought to the house of two ladies, who lived not far from Solihull. These ladies, being unmarried, had no change of clothes for children, and therefore they sent to Mrs. Curtis to borrow some while their own were washing, and she supplied them. It would have been very extraordinary, indeed, if she, or any other person, who had children's clothes in the house, had refused such a request as this.

When the rioters were demolishing the new meeting, another of the clergy is said to have encouraged them by saying, "Well done, my lads. When you have done here, go and pull down their houses too."

Mr. Burn says, p. 94, "Mr. Lawrence (a clergyman in Birmingham) and another gentleman exerted their utmost endeavours to save the Doctor's laboratory." That Mr. Lawrence was no rioter, and did not himself assist in the destruction of my property, I readily acknowledge. But it does not appear that he took any pains to restrain the rioters when they were demolishing the house. On the contrary, they considered him as their friend. Mr. Lawrence was also observed to be reading several of my MS. papers, and to put them

F

into

into his pocket. What he did with them afterwards does not appear. He must have known that, being my property, he ought to have returned them to me, or to my friends. If they were letters, he ought not, as a man of honour, to have read them at all.

In what light the rioters considered Mr. Lawrence, may appear from the following circumstance. When he went to the house the second time, in the morning of the fifteenth, the rioters at my house repeatedly said that Mr. Lawrence had been there, that they were sure he thought they were doing right, for he laughed at them, and they would be damned if they would not go on. Some of them shook him by the hand, crying out, "The curate of the new church. By God. By God." They continued to surround him, and to shake him by the hand near half an hour, while he only desired them to loose him, but expressed no disapprobation of their conduct.

At the same time that, in my own vindication, I mention these particulars of the conduct of some of the clergy of Birmingham, with the greatest satisfaction I do justice to Mr. Darwell, who was indefatigable in his exertions in favour of Mr. Jukes, and I believe of other Dissenters.

That the rioters considered the clergy as being favourable to them, may easily be inferred from every circumstance,



circumstance, which shewed that the Dissenters, as such, were the object of their malice. When Mr. Ryland's house was burning one of the magistrates, pointing to the church, said, "You see your church, you have done your best for it. Do not do any more. We are much obliged to you; you see your strength," &c. &c. Mr. Carles said to Mr. W. Ryland, and two other Dissenters who were following him in the street, on the fifteenth, that they must not come after him, for as they were known to be Dissenters, it would only irritate the mob, and make them more violent; but when he came to the inn where Mr. Carles had promised to meet him, he found the door shut against him.

That other persons besides the magistrates and the clergy were favourable to the rioters, and approved of much of what they did, appeared from several circumstances. On the fifteenth, about noon, Mr. J. Green said, "We are satisfied with what is done, and now I wish they would give over, for they have done enough." On the same day the gentleman in the green coat, one instance of whose conduct has been mentioned before, being at the house of Mr. Ryland, pulled off his hat, and huzzaed to the rioters, saying, "Gentlemen, I applaud you for what you have done, but stop here. This is private property. Though these are the men who wish to overturn the constitution, we have other means of redress."

“ redrefs.” The mob, however, continued to destroy the house.

At Sparkbrook turnpike three gentlemen being on horseback, were conversing very familiarly with the rioters, while my house was burning; when one of them said aloud, “ My lads, you see your power; “ you see that if any attempt is made against the “ government of this country, you have it in your “ power to quash it.”

That some persons above the condition of the common rioters were deeply concerned in the business, appeared from many circumstances, besides those that are mentioned in my Appeal. The forged letter, which was read at my house, in order to instigate the mob to do me mischief, is alone a proof of this, and a copy of it will appear in my Appendix, No. V. When I was at Warwick, at the time of the assizes, I received a summons from our opponents, the hand writing of which could not be distinguished from that of this forged letter. I have no doubt myself who the writer of this forged letter was, though no legal proof can be given of it.

Another forged letter was read at Mr. Russell's house, a copy of which could not be procured, but the following account of it is given upon oath. Two men were on horseback while the house was burning,

ing, and one of them read a paper, which he declared he had found in the house, purporting that "the Presbyterians intended to rise, to burn down the church, blow up the parliament, cut off the king's head, and abolish all taxes." The paper was signed *E. Jefferies, No. 24, St. Thomas's Street, London.* The 16th of August, they said was the time fixed for the insurrection. The person who read the paper said, "Damn it, you see they would destroy us. It is right that we should crush them in time."

They had also another letter, which one of the persons present said was to know how many forces Mr. Russell could collect by the tenth, and that they should be ready to join in concert with their friends in Scotland. This letter was said to be signed by the steward of the Revolution society. He that had this letter said, "Damn them, we will destroy every Presbyterian's house in England." A stranger, who was present, saying that some of the rioters would be hanged for what they were doing, one of them answered, "How can they hang us, when the justices set us agait?" Being asked what justices, he said, "Master Carles and Master Spencer, and I must do the justices' work, and by God I will go to the pay table to night, for I have worked damned hard. Wont you, Tom?" Tom answered, "And by God will I." The per-



son who read one of these forged letters was so described as to be well known in Birmingham.

The following circumstances also shew that there were promoters of the riot among persons of better condition, and that they disguised themselves for the purpose. While the New Meeting was destroying, a person was there who had the appearance of a gentleman, his linen being fine, and with ruffles tucked up. He was very anxious to have the meeting-house consumed, and stood two hours viewing it. The same person was seen at Mr. Russell's, but differently dressed, and on horseback.

After the rioters had entered the Old Meeting, a person was seen in the gallery, who had the appearance of a gentleman, but who endeavoured to disguise himself with a great coat, the cape of which he buttoned up as high as he could, and his hat was brought down very low. Three or four persons came up to him, and conversed with him in whispers. One of the rioters, knowing the witness, aimed a blow at him, so that he left them.

At Moseley Hall also a person was seen above the lower class with a riding coat buttoned up to his chin, and which covered a great part of his head and face. He went about in a deliberate manner, giving orders, which were obeyed. There were several persons

sons dressed like gentlemen at Mr. Humphrys's, but especially at Mr. Russell's, encouraging the rioters, laughing at them, and saying they served the Presbyterians right, for they deserved it. The last circumstance that I shall mention with this view is, that a lady, in a mixed company, unwarily said, "I very often laugh to think what a figure our three dons would cut, one in a waggoner's frock, another with his face blacked, and the other with his hair cropped." But a hint being given that a Dissenter was in the company, she proceeded no farther.

#### SECTION VIII.

##### *Circumstances subsequent to the Riot.*

HAVING considered what passed previous to the riot, and during the continuance of it, as a proof that it originated in the bigotry of the High Church people against the Dissenters, I proceed to what passed subsequent to it; and it will sufficiently appear that the same malignant spirit continued to actuate many persons in Birmingham, in its vicinity, and indeed through the whole kingdom; so that the news of it was far from being so displeasing as it ought to have been.

The conduct of the magistrates, which has been shewn to have been so criminally remiss, to speak in

the most favourable manner, could not but have been known to the generality of the people of Birmingham, and yet at a public town's meeting, "certainly," says Mr. Burn, p. 80, "one of the most numerous, unanimous, and" as he adds, "respectable, ever convened at Birmingham, called for the express purpose of thanking our magistrates, there did not appear any one fact that would justify them in withholding their warmest acknowledgments from those gentlemen."

That any public meeting should be called to thank persons whose conduct was so culpable, as that of Mr. Carles and Dr. Spencer, involved all concerned in that meeting (though I believe a small part of the inhabitants of Birmingham) provided they were acquainted with the circumstances above mentioned, in the guilt of the riot. Mr. Burn himself, by joining in this approbation, voluntarily takes his share in this guilt; and I should not otherwise have thought of charging him with it.

A proof of bigotry, and of an approbation of the riot, similar to that which is implied in the thanks to the magistrates, is the reward that was given to Mr. Brooke, in making him sole solicitor to the hundred. To this lucrative office he was recommended by lord Alesford, "for the zeal that he had shewn in the cause of the Church and King." A club has since been formed in Birmingham, intitled,

*The*



*The Church and King Club*, of which Mr. Brooke is secretary.

Mr. Burn would insinuate, p. 67, that my conduct, in criminating the High Church party in Birmingham, is condemned by those Dissenters who in a public advertisement thanked those members of the establishment who had exerted themselves in their favour. As many of them certainly did so, those thanks were well deserved, and proper. "But from this," Mr. Burn says, p. 68, "it sufficiently appears, that Dr. Priestley, in his insidious management of this business, acts as much in opposition to the avowed opinion of the respectable body of Dissenters in Birmingham, as he has done to the clearest dictates of candour and truth." This, indeed, is true: because it does not yet appear that I have in any instance acted contrary to the dictates of candour and truth. I should myself have cheerfully concurred in that address of thanks, and I now acknowledge myself under much obligation to several members of the church of England for assisting in saving part of my property, and to Mr. Vale in particular, for materially assisting me in my escape. But how is this inconsistent with other members of the church of England being concerned in promoting the riot? Because some, or the majority of any class of men, are worthy persons, does it follow that others of them may not be even deserving of the gallows? Such, however, is the reasoning of  
Mr,

Mr. Burn, and a specimen of the best of his reasoning in this pamphlet.

That there was a great willingness in some of the principal members of the church of England to criminate *me*, and thereby in some measure to justify the riot, appeared from many circumstances. The following look at least that way. Mr. Carles and Mr. Bond (a justice of peace sent down by government) went on Saturday, July 23, to Mr. Hawkes of the Grove, who had some of my books and papers, and demanded a sight of them. When they had examined many of them, they ordered him to send them to them the next day; but afterwards sent him word, that he did not need to do it.

But the same disposition appeared much more strongly by Mr. Curtis reading some of my MS. papers, and sending them, as he acknowledges himself, to the secretary of state; when seeing what I had already suffered, infinitely more than the sentence of the law, if I had even been convicted of sedition, he ought not to have looked into them. Or if he had, and had thought that they might tend to criminate me, he should have sent them to myself. Such conduct, though, as he was incapable of it, he may have no conception of the thing, would have been magnanimous, and have done him great honour,

The

The secretary of state has been guilty of equal meanness and injustice in keeping those papers from me, whose property he knows them to be. He also knows, though Mr. Curtis was probably ignorant of it, that I am not answerable for what other persons may write to me; and surely I cannot be expected to be the wretch that would divulge any thing sent to me in confidence, to the writer's prejudice.

Though copies of these papers, which I understand are *letters*, written to me by an acquaintance, are circulated among the clergy, I do not find (and what I know of them is from the testimony of a friend, who was permitted to read them, but not to take a copy) that they contain any thing more than such free reflections on administration as perpetually occur in the public newspapers, and indeed such as it is allowable in Englishmen to write and to publish, whenever they think the conduct of ministers of state to be weak or criminal. I hereby call upon the person who detains these letters from me to make them as public as he pleases.

The gross calumnies against the Dissenters in general, and myself in particular, invented and circulated in justification of the riot, are another proof of the malignant spirit that prevailed in the town of Birmingham, and that was the proper cause of it. Of this kind must have been the report of my  
dining



dining at the Hotel, haranguing the mob out of the window, and drinking *the king's head in a charger*. It is remarkable that this account, which must have been a malicious fabrication, was the first that was transmitted to London, in order to be inserted in the papers there; and the printer of *The Times* assured me, that it was sent to him by "a respectable person in the mercantile line in Birmingham."

It was currently reported of young Mr. Humphrys, that he had declared his wish "to wade up to the chin in churchmen's blood." This was confidently asserted by Mr. William Gem of New Street, Birmingham; and when he was charged with it, he acknowledged the fact, but said he was drunk when he said it. Mr. Humphrys's spirited advertisement in the public papers on the subject may be seen in my Appendix, No. VI.

Two calumnies of this complexion are retailed by Mr. Burn, p. 113; one that a Dissenter said, that "kings were expensive things in this country;" which, however, is certainly very true; but it was interpreted in the worst sense, or tending to sedition. The other was, that another Dissenter, being applied to to pay a church levy, said, "he should not pay many more." But both these stories were probably no better founded than that respecting Mr. Humphrys, or that of my dining at the Hotel and drinking

drinking the king's head in a charger. Mr. Witten was probably the person alluded to as having made the last of these declarations to Mr. Collins the collector. But when he applied to Mr. Burn, he refused to name his accuser, and Mr. Collins denied that Mr. Witten made use of the language ascribed to him, and that what he did say was only jocosely.

Mr. David Blair is understood to be the person alluded to as having said that kings were expensive; but though he also waited on Mr. Burn, he declined saying the conversation referred to him: so that in both these cases Mr. Burn himself must be considered as the inventor of the reports. The person who was probably Mr. Burn's informer, if he had any, was one who, passing by Mr. Blair on the 14th of July, called after him and said, "So you are going to the Hotel, I find;" and added, "I wish you were all blown up together;" to which nothing at all was replied by Mr. Blair.

What stronger proof can be given of this bigotry and malevolence, which appears to have been the proper cause of the riot, than its thus driving men to invent and propagate known falsehoods, in order to make the Dissenters odious? They who thus show that they wish to make the Dissenters appear the proper objects of the riot, may well be suspected of having fomented it.

The

The profane practice of drinking damnation and confusion to the Dissenters is another proof of a violent party spirit, and though instances of it may be unknown, as he says they are, to Mr. Burn, the charge is unquestionably true; and I have no doubt that the practice is still continued and increased. I myself perfectly remember a Dissenter relating to me a conversation he had with Mr. Carles, who said to him, and not long before the riot, "Though in my cups I do sometimes drink damnation to you, I would not hurt a hair of your heads." Whatever he might think at the moment, it appears that his good will, or rather his no ill will, to the Dissenters, did not continue long.

When I was at Warwick, at the late assizes, several persons in the Public Hall cried aloud, "Damn him, there is the cause of all the mischief;" and one man, an attorney in the place, followed me a great way in the public street, then pretty much crowded, and when I was accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Berington, Mr. Galton, and Mr. Keir, three as respectable men as the county can furnish, damning me in the most vociferous manner, and expressing his earnest wish that I had been burned in my house. A toast publicly given and drank with great festivity at the same time was, "May every revolution dinner be followed by a hot supper." What can be a clearer proof than this, that the  
same



same spirit which prompted the riot still continues without any abatement, and, if not restrained, would soon produce another? There were serious apprehensions of one while I was at Warwick, and one of the judges, I was informed, was not a little alarmed on that account.

At Birmingham a member of the establishment lately complained to one of my congregation there, of being obliged, when in company, to drink *Church and King*, and damnation to the Presbyterians.

Mr. Burn calls what I have said of the clergy having been the first to calumniate the Dissenters, and to place the conduct of the mob in the most favourable light, p. 72, "a gratuitous assertion, without even the pretence of evidence." "What evidence," he says, p. 74, "has Dr. Priestley to produce, that they have not done so," viz. been the first to preach moderation.

That Mr. Madan preached a very proper sermon after the riot, I have been informed. It was becoming him as a christian minister. But this was not the case with Mr. Curtis. One of his constant hearers was so much offended at a discourse of his, delivered about the same time, that he declared that "if he had been influenced by it, he must have been a ruffian."

Among

Among other instances of bigotry, and probably that of some of the clergy at Birmingham, I have been informed that a brick, taken as hot as it could be well handled from the ruins of the new meeting-house, was carefully packed up, and sent to the author of several works, which sufficiently discover his high-church principles, and that on a paper which accompanied it, was the word ΑΔΗΛΟΣ, which, being in Greek, must have been written by a scholar, and therefore probably a clergyman of the place. I was further informed, that he was advised to send this brick to the archbishop of Canterbury. Whether he did so or not, I have not heard. Thus have the bigots exulted in the success of their enterprise. But the ruins of that building will plead against them with much more energy than all the sermons that could ever have been delivered in it, had it been left standing.

I had observed that the clergy should have offered us the use of their churches till our meeting-houses could have been rebuilt. On this Mr. Burn says, p. 75, 76, "The offer of the churches to the Dissenters must have come after my letter to the inhabitants of Birmingham, and must have been offered as a compensation for injuries done to the Dissenters, whom they were conscious they never injured." It cannot be denied, however, that we

we were injured, and no doubt by churchmen; for they were not Dissenters who demolished the meeting-houses. And where would have been the impropriety of some members of the establishment repairing the injuries done to us by others? Would this have been any confession of their guilt? This is curious reasoning, indeed. However, the meeting-houses had been in ruins a week before my letter reached Birmingham. Had the idea then occurred to any member of the establishment? At that time I was far enough from having the least idea of any of the clergy promoting the riot, and therefore could not mean that they should do any thing as a compensation for injuries which they had done to us, and their compliance with my proposal would have tended more to exculpate them from any approbation of the riot than any thing else that could have been devised. That I had no very bad opinion of the clergy of Birmingham at the time of the riot, will be evident from a letter which I wrote, to be addressed to them the day after that to the inhabitants in general. I was, however, dissuaded by my friends from sending it to the printer, they being of opinion that it would not answer any good purpose: but I shall assert it in my Appendix, No. VII.



## SECTION IX.

*Observations on the Proceedings in the Courts of Judicature on Occasion of the Riot.*

NOTHING, perhaps, shews a more general approbation of the riot, though the approvers were by no means the majority of the church people, than what passed relating to the *trials* which followed. Every possible difficulty was thrown in the way of procuring evidence against the rioters, and every thing was done to screen them from punishment. Also, all that men could do was done to prevent the sufferers from receiving the poor compensation which the law provided for them. It argued some consciousness of guilt, that it was considered as a great point gained by the High Church party when the House of Commons refused to make any inquiry into the cause of the riot, and when the ministry gave no encouragement to the prosecution of the magistrates, and other promoters of the riot. What have innocent persons to dread from the consequences of inquiry into their conduct? Let the reader attend to the following facts, and draw his own inferences from them.

A subscription was made to defray the expence of defending the rioters at the assizes. A letter was drawn up by some of the clergy of Birmingham, addressed to the judges on the circuit, begging them

to make a distinction between those of the rioters whose object was mere plunder, and those who acted from a pure but blind motive to serve their Church and King. One of the clergy, who mentioned this, said he admired the letter, and had signed it himself. Whether it was owing to this measure, or others of a similar tendency, it is a fact, that no persons have yet been punished merely for being concerned in the riot, but because they were the pests of society on other accounts. Consequently, nothing has been done to deter others from committing a riot on the same account.

Much pains were taken to make Mr. Job Harvey, the evidence against Hands, or Hammond, (who was condemned for firing the house of Mr. Ryland) say something favourable concerning him when he was re-examined before Mr. Bond; and though all that he could say was, that he had heard some of the persons present say, that he was pulling up the boards to let the rioters out from below, and his own proper evidence did not go so far, Hands was pardoned. Such were not the proceedings with respect to the riot in London.

Shuker, who had been condemned for firing Mr. Ryland's house, abused J. Elwall, who had been one of the witnesses against him, in a shocking manner, striking him on the head with his cryer's bell, demolishing

lishing his fruit-stall, &c. &c. by which he lost more than fifty shillings. When he applied for redress to Dr. Spencer and Mr. Carles, it was a long time before they would take his evidence, on the pretence of his not being able to produce a good character. When this was done, in the most satisfactory manner, the justices still would not sign any warrant against Shuker, but contented themselves with admonishing him not to insult Elwall any more, on which Shuker behaved in the most insolent manner, and continued to threaten him.

The same Elwall was also grossly insulted by one Davis, and others, on account of his evidence; being burned in effigy before his own door, and his family kept in a state of alarm several nights together; and he was not able to get any warrant from Mr. Carles, to whom he applied for protection. He also applied, but in vain, to Dr. Spencer, after Davis had threatened to murder him in a fortnight's time.

Though there is an act of parliament to indemnify those who suffer by riots, and though on other occasions it has been so construed as to afford real relief, such was the spirit that actuated our enemies, and so successfully did they exert themselves, that it has been ineffectual in our case. The law was the very same with respect to us and the Catholics in 1780; but the issue of the trials was very different. All the



the sufferers in London obtained ample redress, and the rioters were rigorously punished. Money was even issued from the treasury for the relief of the sufferers immediately, and long before they could have received any in the usual course of justice.

In the very same year in which the riot was at Birmingham, there was another at Sheffield, and Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman, was a considerable sufferer. But at the same assizes in which we met with every difficulty that could be thrown in the way of our claims, and consequently received a very inadequate compensation, Mr. Wilkinson recovered the whole of his loss, and had even more offered him than he chose to accept; being, as he thought, more than the real amount of his loss. In his case, the hundred made no opposition to his claim, while in our case nothing was spared to defeat our application for redress.

Justice and equity evidently require that losses by riots should be most amply made good, because double and treble recompence in a pecuniary way cannot indemnify the sufferers; and because the great object of all civil government is protection from lawless violence. It was, no doubt, the intention of the law-makers to give ample compensation; but the act of parliament admitted of much latitude of interpretation, and in its literal construction was not calculated to give us relief. When

this was perceived, nothing was more reasonable than that the country at large should be taxed to supply the deficiency, and the inhabitants of the place, which had been disgraced by the riot, should have promoted an application to the legislature for our farther relief. But so far was this from being the case, that a committee was appointed by the hundred in which the riots took place, for the purpose of defending themselves against our claims; and they executed their trust so effectually, that they even put the hundred to considerable expence to do it. It is even supposed that, notwithstanding their success in this measure, by which they reduced our claims between one fourth and one third, the hundred will have little, if at all, less to pay than if our claims had been allowed in their full extent, and no opposition had been made to them.

I shall take this opportunity to state my own case, which was similar to that of all my fellow-sufferers.

My own wish, which I expressed to my friends, was to employ no lawyer in my cause, but simply to carry into the court a statement of what, to the best of my recollection, I had lost in the riot, and leave the country to make me whatever compensation they should think proper. In this method, however, I was told that it would be impossible for me to receive any compensation at all.

I therefore

I therefore consented to do what the other sufferers did upon the occasion, getting estimates of what I had lost by sworn appraisers, and other competent judges of the different articles; and the difficulty and irksomeness of doing *this*, especially in the multiplicity of articles in my particular case, my own recollection being uncommonly imperfect, is not to be described; without considering the *time* which it took up, which no stranger to the business will readily believe.

To save some time, trouble, and expence, I proposed to the Committee who acted for the hundred, by a clergyman, and a particular friend of mine, who was well acquainted with several of them, to request that appraisers on their side might meet appraisers on mine in London, and agree on the amount of the loss. But this reasonable request was refused. I, however, repeated it in as respectful a letter as I could write to the Committee a little before the trial, but with no better success; though in that letter I mentioned my former application, and assured them that all the appraisers had been instructed by me, as they would all bear witness, to charge too little, rather than too much, for every article; but that I would willingly abide by the opinion of their own appraisers. I also mentioned my original wish, to have employed no lawyer to plead for me, and my having declined to avail myself of the service of Mr. Erskine, or any



other able counsel that I should choose, which my friends proposed to be at the expence of; and that I should content myself with such counsel as the other sufferers would employ, and which usually attended that circuit. The judge, apprehensive of some disturbance on account of my cause, expressed his wish that it might be settled by arbitration. To this proposal I immediately signified my hearty consent, and my willingness to abide by the decision of the foreman of the jury, though a high churchman, and a person with whom I had no acquaintance. The judge, I was informed, was pleased with this, but it was not accepted by the opposite party. Consequently the cause took its regular course.

My books were estimated at 432l. 15s. 6d. my philosophical apparatus at 605l. 17s. my manuscripts at 370l. 15s. and my household goods, including whatever could be appraised by a common appraiser in my library and laboratory, as shelves, &c. &c. &c. 1277l. 6s. The whole was 2686l. 13s. 6d. But this was far from being the whole of my loss, or of the indemnification that I was entitled to receive, on the idea of being replaced as I had been before on the same spot, which, in equity, ought to have been the rule of proceeding in the case.

Nothing was charged for the carriage and pack-  
age of such things as could only have been pro-  
cured

cured from London, or other distant places; which in my case could not have been less than 40l; nothing for damage to books not materially mutilated, or injured, but which will make the books that were preserved (about 2000) of less value, if ever they be sold, by, I should suppose, 50l. Nothing was charged for the recovery of goods dispersed by the rioters, which, to myself or my friends, could not, I think, have been less than 40l. Nothing was charged for *pamphlets*, which I think must have been worth 10l. While I was at Warwick I recollected articles in my laboratory, not mentioned in the inventory, worth about 20l. Now that I am resuming my experiments, I recollect many others as I find the want of them, and I expect to do so for some time to come. The amount of these I should conjecture to be about 20l. more. The lease of my house, which had risen much in value after I took it, was worth at the least 100l. If to this be added the expence attending my flight from Birmingham, my removal to London with my family, and the carriage of the goods I recovered, which would necessarily attend my settlement in a place so distant as London, which can hardly be estimated at less than 100l. the amount of the articles not charged in my estimate, will be 380l. and will make my whole loss to be 3066l. 13s. 6d.

In this estimate nothing was charged for my MSS, more than the money that would have been  
given

given for them by a bookfeller in case of my death. My sermons, for instance, were only charged half a guinea apiece, though the sermons of a living preacher ought, in equity, to be charged much higher. For I would observe on this occasion, that because the law can give no recompence for any injuries besides *money*, money is often given when the damage is by no means of a pecuniary nature; and there can be no reason why this should not have been done in my case.

When we were at Warwick, and found we had to encounter the most determined opposition of our enemies, who came prepared to litigate every article, and that the law itself, rigorously interpreted, as it would be, was not calculated to redress our wrongs, we all reduced our claims much below our first estimates \*. Mine, including that for my house, which I had on lease, (estimated together with the loss of rent, appraisements, &c. &c. at 1426l. 3s. 3d. and which, though not properly mine, was by the rules of law claimed in my name) was reduced from 4492l. 16s. 9d. to 4112l. 16s. 9d.; and the verdict I obtained was 2502l. 18s.; of which I could not do better than allow my landlord 1000l. besides giving up my lease. Consequently, I was,

\* Previous to this I had employed a person in Birmingham to estimate the household goods; and his estimate, which was considerably lower than that of the London appraisers, was brought into Court.

exclusively



exclusively of costs, really a loser, notwithstanding the verdict in my favour, 1563l. 15s. 6d.

The amount of my law expences at Birmingham, Warwick, and London, though the estimate of my books and instruments was made by persons who charged nothing for their trouble, was very near 850l. while the costs allowed was only 493l. so that in this article my loss was 357l. which makes the whole amount of my pecuniary loss to be 1920l. 15s. 6d. besides being driven into a less pleasing and much more expensive situation than I was in before. In this country then, the government of which is so much boasted of, it has not been my fate to receive either protection, or redress, and all my fellow-sufferers may say the same.

We do not complain of the intention of the law, or of the disposition of the judges, but of the unabated malice of our enemies, and the influence they had on the country in general. They spared no means to prevent our having any redress, and our sufferings were so far from softening them, and exciting any degree of compassion, that the greatest sufferers were exposed to the greatest insults. I hardly know an instance of any men deserving better of any town than Mr. Russell and Mr. Hutton, men of the most disinterested public spirit, and indefatigable in public business; and yet they were  
the

the persons on whom the extreme of malice and gross abuse chiefly fell. But such, in all ages, and in all countries, has been the fate of great and active worth.

There was something particularly, and most unreasonably hard in the case of Mr. Hutton. Mr. Russell and myself were become obnoxious on account of our religious principles, and therefore, in the eye of bigotry, received only *the due reward of our deeds*; but, in this respect, Mr. Hutton *had done nothing amiss*. He suffered the extreme of injustice himself, for nothing but his unwearied endeavour to procure justice for others.

For the best use of great talents for public business, and of a higher kind than Mr. Hutton attended to, I have not yet known any man superior to Mr. Russell, hardly any that, in all respects, I think to be his equal; and the malice of his enemies is in full proportion to his talents and his virtues. With respect to damages in the court, he came off better than Mr. Hutton.

To return to this subject, our adversaries not content with the counsel that usually attended the circuit, at a great expence employed Mr. Hardinge, the Queen's solicitor, who to serve them neglected his duty as a judge on the Welch circuit, and who spared  
nothing

nothing to inflame the court and the jury against us; quoting not only in my cause, but in those of the other sufferers, passages from my writings calculated to represent me as the pest of society, and unworthy of protection or of recompence. The first judge, Baron Thompson, endeavoured in vain to check his violence, and therefore Baron Eyre, it is thought, came down on purpose; but though he did it in the causes of the other sufferers, when my own cause came before the court he was permitted to declaim against me and my writings (of which he appeared to know nothing more than the extracts with which he had been furnished for the purpose of his abuse) without any restraint, though there was nothing properly before the court but the estimate of damages occasioned by the riot; and if I had been guilty of sedition, I ought to have been accused as such, and suffered the penalty of the law.

The legal proof of the articles of my loss was peculiarly difficult, from the nature and multiplicity of them; nothing of the kind having ever, as I believe, come before a court of judicature before. It was deemed necessary that I should prove my having been in possession of more than a thousand different articles, and at the time of the riot. One friend or other could have attested my having had most of the instruments, though not the chymical substances;



substances; but it was necessary they should all be present in court. Their certificates in writing (and for this purpose I came provided with them, in the hand-writing of Dr. Heberden and others, who at different times had made me presents of them) were rejected as no legal evidence; and when a number of articles in my laboratory were classed together, the opposite counsel diverted themselves and the court, exposing their own ignorance, just as so many Goths and Vandals would have done. My own leading counsel was as little qualified to defend me, being equally ignorant of philosophy, and declaring in court that he had not read any of my theological or political writings.

The judge, though no chymist, was willing to make allowance for the singular difficulty in my cause, as both the catalogue of my books, and the index of substances in the laboratory, were destroyed, together with the books and instruments; and had any regard been paid to his opinion, considerably more would have been awarded me. On what principle the jury proceeded is best known to themselves, but I believe that very little was allowed for my books, because many of them were destroyed in another hundred, whither they had been conveyed by my friends, though the destruction began at my own house, and they did not say what claim I had on the other hundred.

In

In general I thought the judge impartial in summing up the evidence ; but in some respects, considering the manifest disposition of the jury, it tended to give too much colour to their injustice. The catalogue of my library being destroyed, together with the library itself, I could only make out a list of the books that were wanting from my own recollection of them, my friends not being able to attest their knowledge of more than a few of them, such as they had occasionally seen or borrowed, though the number of the books lost was sufficiently ascertained. " This enumeration," said the judge, " coming " from the plaintiff himself, and not proved by any " witness, I was bound to reject evidence of that " kind, and could not suffer it to be received." Mr. Payne, my witness, had set a value upon 440 other volumes, which were proved to be missing (though I could not myself pretend to recollect what they were) by supposing them to be of the same value, one with another, with books of the same size in what remained of the library. This, the judge said, was " no measure of value at all, as " it was impossible so to estimate books ; and therefore he found himself bound to reject that evidence ;" adding, however, that " as the plaintiff " could not have been supposed to have collected " trash, the jury might, *if they thought proper*, make " some addition to the sum, upon the ground of damage to the library." But, disposed as they evidently were, they were sure to allow nothing on this account.

I have heard of a judge deciding very differently in a case not much unlike this of mine.—A boy had been robbed of a seal which had contained some precious stone, of the nature and value of which the boy himself was wholly ignorant, being only able to produce the socket in which it had been set. The judge, however, observed, that the case should be interpreted in *damnum fraudatoris*; and he directed that the boy should receive the value of the finest diamond that would fill that socket, because the stone *might* have been of that value.

Mr. Hardinge also (whose virulent declamation the judge himself observed might, for any thing that appeared in court, be mere calumny) should not have been suffered to proceed as he did, since it could only tend to prejudice the minds of the jury against me, and indispose them to do justice. His abuse of me was exactly similar to that of Mr. Wedderburn's (now Lord Loughborough) on Dr. Franklin at the privy council, when the cause before the court related to the conduct of the governor of the province. It was a day of great triumph for the court party. But had they any reason to exult in it ten years from that time? As little reason may the *Church and King* party in this country have to exult in the riot at Birmingham, and the assizes at Warwick, ten years from that event,

I was



I was present at that memorable abuse of Dr. Franklin, being accompanied to the privy council by Mr. Burke: he smiled, and shook me by the hand, as he went out of the room; and the next morning he observed to me, that the things for which he had been so grossly insulted were, he believed, among the best actions of his life, and such as he should do again in the same circumstances. I can truly say the same with respect to every thing that has been most virulently urged against me.

On the whole, it is evident that, by whatever rule the jury at Warwick went, they allowed me little or nothing for my books, philosophical instruments, or manuscripts, as the sum that was awarded me would do little more than re-furnish the house as it was before. They refused to say what they allowed for the separate articles of my loss, except on account of *the house*, which I was under obligation to rebuild. For this, which was not mine, it was thought by some that the allowance was ample enough, being 957l. 18s.

This detail I thought necessary to go into, in order to explain the consequences of the riot, and the state of our laws, and of the actual administration of them in my case, that those who think it a proper object may provide a more effectual remedy for a similar evil in future time.

H

I must

I must add, that though the mischief was done more than a year ago, I have not yet (Nov. 1, 1792) received any part of the compensation awarded me, and yet I have been obliged to advance the whole expence of the law-suit; so that, if any allowance be made for the interest of money, my pecuniary loss will be considerably greater than I have stated it to be. If I had not been assisted by my friends, I could not have prosecuted my right at all, and therefore must have gone without any redress. And so much trouble and expence have attended this business, that in case of any other misfortune of the same kind (from which I am far from considering myself as exempt) my present determination is to sit down with the loss, and not to trouble the country on the subject. The law, as now administered, may do all very well for churchmen, but I have found by experience that it is not calculated to protect Dissenters, as such, or to procure a redress of the wrongs done to *them*.

SECTION X.

*Of the Approbation of the Riot, and the Extent of High Church Principles, which were the Cause of it, in other Parts of the Kingdom.*

THE spirit of party, intimately connected with the approbation of the riot in Birmingham, is even now far from being confined to that town or neighbourhood, especially among the clergy. One of the most speaking and curious instances of this is the following. A clergyman, distinguished by his writings, requested another clergyman, who was going to Birmingham, to procure him a quantity of ashes from the ruins of the meeting in which I had preached; and the request was complied with. What an excellent *Protestant Dominic* would this clergyman make!

So far were the clergy from being moved to any thing like compassion by what I had suffered in the riot, that immediately after this their calumnies were doubled, and their cries for farther vengeance upon me became louder than ever. An instance of this is an extract from the Shrewsbury Chronicle, signed ΟΥΔΕΙΣ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΣ, which may be seen in the Appendix, No. VIII.



This virulent paper was, however, very ably answered by a person whose signature was *An enemy to intolerance and persecution*, though he avowed religious sentiments very different from mine.

Mr. Burn seems to doubt the truth of what I said of a clergyman calling our sufferings in an Assize sermon *wholesome severity*. "Had he," he says, p. 73, "been a Birmingham clergyman, we have no doubt his name would have appeared." I do not see why I should be more backward, or more ready, to mention his name on this account. But the sermon is now published, though without the name of the author, which was Allen, who resides at or near Illford. The expression in the sermon as now printed is not the very same that was reported, but to the same purport. He was, however, properly reprimanded for what he delivered by the judge and the counsel afterwards.

That the same spirit which prompted the riot in Birmingham pervaded very distant parts of the country, the following is a curious instance. During the riot at Birmingham some officers were in conversation at Dulot's library at Brighthelmstone, when one of them was overheard to say (on its being suggested that it was probable his regiment would be sent to Birmingham to quell the rioters) that he hoped if his men were sent thither  
that

that they would not hurt a hair of any of the rioters heads.

Another officer (supposed to be of the guards) was heard to declare at Crawford's library at Bright-helmstone, that it was to be lamented that Dr. Priestley had escaped; and that, if he had been at Birmingham, he would have gone through the fire, at the hazard of *losing a limb*, but that the Doctor should have lost his life. I am persuaded, however, that the disposition of those particular persons is far from being that of the generality of British officers: they have, I trust, better notions of the British constitution, and of that British liberty which they are appointed to defend.

The idea that was generally, and most assiduously, propagated concerning me, and the tendency of my writings, by those of whom the best that can be said is, that they knew nothing of either, may be conceived from an *epitaph* that was written for me, as was supposed, by some person at Exeter, and which, for the amusement of my readers, I shall insert in the Appendix, No. IX.

The person who transmitted this curious piece to a friend of mine adds, " The virulence of the above  
" is nearly equalled, if not surpassed, by what I  
" have been informed are the sentiments very fre-  
" quently uttered by the dissipated and the profane

“ bigots of Bristol, and in all parts of the kingdom, viz. for the first sentiment at table, *Damnation to Dr. Priestley, and success to the Birmingham mob, or Damnation to Dr. Priestley, and destruction to his writings,*”

Hereafter it will perhaps not be believed that such barefaced misrepresentation and calumny, so entirely void of all foundation, could be published in a country in which the means of better information almost obtrudes itself. Such pains, however, has been taken to represent me as an infidel with respect to religion, and a most pestilent member of society, that I doubt not a great majority of the people of this country actually consider me in that light, the avowed enemy of God and man. But this will not be thought extraordinary when it is considered how great a proportion of the information of Englishmen is derived from the public newspapers, and how many of them have abounded with paragraphs exhibiting me in this light from some time before the riot, and to this day. I am tempted to give a specimen of this which fell into my hands by accident, and I presume it is only of a piece with hundreds of others; but I reserve it for the Appendix, No. X.

That some persons must make it the interest of the proprietors of the newspapers to procure, and insert, such articles might be concluded *à priori*.  
But



But an acquaintance of mine, being desired to settle a difference between two of these proprietors, saw a list of names of persons to be abused, and among them was mine. Of what class of newspapers this was I need not say.

Such an unfair advantage, taken to prejudice the minds of the people against particular persons or parties, is a circumstance that calls loudly for public inquiry, and punishment, by the representatives of the nation, who ought, as far as possible, to provide for the protection of the character, as well as the property, of every individual of the society.

The latter part of this paper relates to an impudent falsehood that has been much circulated, though it reflects disgrace upon the late Dr. Johnson, and not upon me, viz. that when I was at Oxford, he left a company on my being introduced to it. In fact, we never were at Oxford at the same time, and the only interview I ever had with him was at Mr. Paradise's, where we dined together at his own request. He was particularly civil to me, and promised to call upon me the next time he should go through Birmingham. He behaved with the same civility to Dr. Price, when they supped together at Dr. Adams's, at Oxford. Several circumstances shew that Dr. Johnson had not so much of bigotry at the decline of life, as had distinguished him before, on which account it is well known to all our

common acquaintance, that I declined all their pressing solicitations to be introduced to him. It were to be wished that the church of England would resemble Dr. Johnson in growing milder and more tolerant in its old age; but, on the contrary, like most other aged persons, she seems to grow more peevish and obstinate.

I do not know, however, whether, on the whole, the general prevalence of the High Church party in this country is more clearly manifested than by its having pervaded societies of *philosophers*, with whom, in that capacity, I certainly did not stand ill.

I observed in my *Appeal*, that the only society, not professedly formed on the principle of civil or religious liberty, that had addressed me on occasion of the riot, was the philosophical society at Derby, whose Address I inserted in my Appendix. It still stands a single instance of the kind. Mr. <sup>Hope</sup>~~Robt.~~, a clergyman, and member of that society, was, however, so much offended at it, that, without the knowledge of the society, he published an account of the manner in which it had been done, calculated to defeat the effect of it. The other members of that society had the spirit to resent it properly, and to exclude him from the society. I shall insert his *Advertisement*, and the *Answer of the society*, in my Appendix, No, XI, and XII.

The

The philosophical society at Manchester had not the same liberality. Though they had not only done me the honour to make me one of their members, but had presented me with fifty pounds to assist me in defraying the expence of my experiments ; yet when it was proposed to address me on the destruction of my laboratory, and it was proposed that nothing should be contained in the Address that should imply any approbation of my civil or religious principles, the motion was negatived by a considerable majority.

One of the reasons alledged at Manchester against the proposed Address was, that none had been sent to me from the *Royal Society*. Many persons have expressed their surprise that I had no letter of condolence, or even pecuniary assistance, from that body, to which I hope I have been no disgrace. I have even been insulted by the High Church party on this account. Had it been a clergyman of the church of England who had been a member of that body, and whose laboratory had been destroyed by rioters, whether his labours had contributed any thing or nothing to the stock of philosophical knowledge, his case, I doubt not, would have been considered by the opulent members of the society, or the patron of it. But I was too well acquainted with the political principles of that society to expect any thing of the kind in *my* favour. Had I been a second Newton, and what I am, and cannot help being,



ing in other respects, viz. an Unitarian Dissenter, my expectations from that quarter would not have been higher.

I had sufficient evidence of this in the rejection of Mr. Cooper, though originally recommended by Mr. Kirwan, Dr. Crawford, Mr. Watson, and Mr. Watt, as well as myself. As Mr. Cooper's general abilities appear by his publications to be of the highest order\*, and his acquaintance with philosophy and chemistry was well known, it was evident that his rejection could not have been owing to any thing but his religious or political principles, with which a philosophical society had no concern. So confident was I of the merit of Mr. Cooper, and of the sufficiency of his recommendation, not by *gentlemen members*, but by scientific persons, that I had not entertained the least doubt of his election, and was never more surprised than when I heard that it did not take place.

Thinking that a philosophical society might, on reconsideration, repent of having rejected a man so recommended to them, Mr. Cooper's friends thought it right to propose him a second time; and to the former signatures of his certificate the following were added, viz. Mr. Boulton, Mr. Wedgwood, and Sir G. Staunton; and as it had been

\* See his *volume of Tracts*; his *Essays* in the *Memoirs* of the Manchester Philosophical and Literary Society; and his *Reply to Mr. Burke's Invektive*.

objected

objected before, that the members of the society in Manchester, where he resided, had not signed his certificate, they now all joined in it, viz. Mr. Bayley, Dr. Percival, Dr. White, and Mr. Henry. Notwithstanding these additional signatures, when the day of balloting came, he was rejected by a much greater majority than before.

The ten who signed Mr. Cooper's certificate (without arrogating any thing to myself, who first proposed it to him) are unquestionably among the first in the list of members for reputation as philosophers; and if about as many more were added to them, the rest are, I do not say improper members, but such as the philosophical part of the world has not yet heard much of. When this is considered, and that Mr. Keir, and other truly effective and distinguished members of the society, would have signed Mr. Cooper's certificate if they could, have said, that they had *personal knowledge* of him (which the rules of the society require) I do not feel myself disgraced for having recommended him, nor does he for being rejected,

It has since been objected to Mr. Cooper, that he is concerned in a manufactory; but when he was first proposed, his profession was that of a barrister at law, though his pursuits were then chiefly literary and philosophical. Having sufficient leisure, his knowledge of chemistry induced him to join in a bleaching  
manufactory

manufactory on the new principles. On the whole, I cannot help considering the rejection of Mr. Cooper, recommended as he was, by the Royal Society as a most decisive proof of the influence of High Church principles in this country on a body of men who might be expected to be the most liberal. Mr. Cooper, though originally educated at Oxford, now classes with Unitarian Dissenters: he has given noble proofs of his public principles, and his public spirit, and he has been stigmatized by Mr. Burke.

It were to be wished that the Royal Society would make some more explicit declaration of the proper qualifications of their members. Some time ago an excellent naturalist, Mr. Raspe, was expelled for breaking the eighth commandment, of which it was not known before that the members of the Royal Society were the guardians. This would not, however, have been perhaps so much amiss, if the fact had been proved: but the expulsion had too much the appearance of a royal mandate. Who can tell but that other members may be proposed to be expelled for breaking the seventh, or even the tenth commandment? Mr. Cooper's moral character, however, is irreproachable; so that his disqualification must be of another kind. At least he cannot be charged with a breach of the first commandment.

In these remarks on the Royal Society I mean no reflection on any particular member, and least of  
all



all on the president, who in several important respects fills his station in a manner highly honourable to the society and to himself. This is an opinion that I always maintained, when several of my particular friends thought differently. If the society must be both philosophical and royal, I do not know where we could find a more proper president.

I am happy to be able, by the assistance of my friends, to have in some measure replaced my apparatus, and I am now resuming my experiments. I have, indeed, lost more than a whole year, besides, in some respects, the result of the labour of several years; but while I live, I shall continue my experiments as I have formerly done; and if any thing worth the notice of the public should occur to me, I shall communicate it through the channel of the Royal Society, provided they will receive my papers. I shall not quarrel with the institution on account of the present administration of its affairs. The times may change, and that circumstance may change with them.

In this almost universal prevalence of a spirit so extremely hostile to me and my friends, and which would be gratified by my destruction, it cannot be any matter of surprise, that a son of mine should wish to abandon a country in which his father has been used as I have been, especially when it is considered  
that

that this son was present at the riot in Birmingham, exerting himself all the dreadful night of the 14th of July, to save what he could of my most valuable property; that in consequence of this his life was in imminent danger, and another young man was nearly killed because he was mistaken for him. This would probably have been his fate, if a friend had not almost perforce kept him concealed some days, so that neither myself nor his mother knew what was become of him. I had not, however, the ambition to court the honour that has been shewn him by the national assembly of France, and even declined the proposal of his naturalization. At the most, I supposed it would have been done without any *eclat*; and I knew nothing of its being done in so very honourable a way till I saw the account in the public newspapers. To whatever country this son of mine shall choose to attach himself, I trust that, from the good principles, and the spirit, that he has hitherto shewn, he will discharge the duties of a good citizen.

As to myself, I cannot be supposed to feel much attachment to a country in which I have neither found protection, nor redress. But I am too old, and my habits too fixed, to remove, as I own I should otherwise have been disposed to do, to France, or America. The little that I am capable of doing must be in England, where I shall therefore continue, as  
long

long as it should please the supreme Disposer of all things to permit me \*.

It might have been thought that, having written so much in defence of revelation, and of Christianity in general, more perhaps than all the clergy of the church of England now living; this defence of a *common cause* would have been received as some atonement for my demerits in writing against civil establishments of Christianity, and particular doctrines. But had I been an open enemy of all religion, the animosity against me could not have been greater than it is. Neither Mr. Hume nor Mr. Gibbon was a thousandth part so obnoxious to the clergy as I am; so little respect have my enemies for Christianity itself, compared with what they have for their emoluments from it.

As to my supposed hostility to the principles of the civil constitution of this country, there has been no pretence whatever for charging me with any thing of the kind. Besides that the very catalogue of my publications will prove that my life has been devoted to literature, and chiefly to natural philosophy and theology, which have not left me any leisure for factious politics; in the few things that I

\* Since this was written, I have myself, without any solicitation on my part, been made a citizen of France, and moreover elected a member of the present Conventional Assembly. These, I scruple not to avow, I consider as the greatest of honours; though, for the reasons which are now made public, I have declined accepting the latter.



have written of a political nature, I have been an avowed advocate for our mixed government by *King, Lords, and Commons*; but because I have objected to the ecclesiastical part of it, and to particular religious tenets, I have been industriously represented as openly seditious, and endeavouring the overthrow of every thing that is *fixed*, the enemy of all order, and of all government.

Every publication which bears my name is in favour of our present form of government. But if I had not thought so highly of it, and had seen reason for preferring a more republican form, and had openly advanced that opinion; I do not know that the proposing to free discussion a system of government different from that of England, even to Englishmen, is any crime, according to the existing laws of this country. It has always been thought, at least, that our constitution authorises the free proposal, and discussion, of all theoretical principles whatever, political ones not excepted. And though I might now recommend a very different form of government to a people who had no previous prejudices or habits, the case is very different with respect to one that *has*; and it is the duty of every good citizen to maintain that government of any country which the majority of its inhabitants approve, whether he himself should otherwise prefer it, or not.

A very great majority of Englishmen, I am well persuaded, are friends to what are called *high maxims of government*. They would choose to have the power of the crown rather enlarged than reduced, and would rather see all the Dissenters banished than any reformation made in the church. A dread of every thing tending to *republicanism* is manifestly increased of late years, and is likely to increase still more. The very term is become one of the most opprobrious in the English language. The clergy (whose near alliance with the court, and the present royal family, after having been almost a century hostile to them, is a remarkable event in the present reign) have contributed not a little to that leaning to arbitrary power in the crown which has lately been growing upon us. They preach up the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance with as little disguise as their ancestors did in the reigns of the Stuarts, and their adulation of the king and of the minister is abject in the extreme. Both Mr. Madan's sermon and Mr. Burn's reply to my

# I

## Appeal

Appeal discover the same spirit; and any sentiment in favour of liberty that is at all bold and manly, such as, till of late, was deemed becoming Englishmen, and the disciples of Mr. Locke, is now reprobated as seditious.

In these circumstances, it would be nothing less than madness seriously to attempt a change in the constitution, and I hope I am not absolutely insane. I sincerely wish my countrymen, as part of the human race (though, I own, I now feel no particular attachment to them on any other ground) the undisturbed enjoyment of that form of government which they so evidently approve; and as I have no favour to ask of them, or of their governors, besides mere protection, as to a stranger, while I violate no known law, and have not this to ask for any long term,\* I hope it will be granted me. If not, I must, like many others, in all ages and all nations, submit to whatever the supreme Being, whose eye is upon us all, and who I believe intends, and will in his own time bring about, the good of all, shall appoint, and by their means execute.

*Mr.*



*Mr. Russell's Letter to Dr. Priestley.*

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE somewhere read that to argue with a person while he is in a passion, is just as wise as to hold a lanthorn to a blind man. The opponents of myself and of my patriotic companions, on the 14th of July 1791, have evidently been under the most unreasonable phrensy that ever disgraced this nation; and had we been willing to feed it by returning the abuse and calumny that was so outrageously poured upon us; we might have retorted long ago. But as our appeal is to the calmer passions, it appeared necessary to wait till the season of fury was over, and we could hope that the still small voice of truth would be listened to. However the time for a full reply to Mr. Burn's most extraordinary performance is, in my opinion, now come, and I fear any farther delay will be an injury to the cause for which we are suffering. I rejoice therefore to hear that you are preparing a second part of your Appeal, not doubting but that this insidious publication will have a full share of your notice, and be exposed as it deserves.

This leads me, as a friend to society, to lament, and I do it very sincerely; that any of the clergy should think abuse of the Dissenters is now the road to preferment, and that so many concurrent circumstances should almost compel others to think so too. However, while we pity those whose minds are thus debased, and who can disgrace the talents that they possess by such an unworthy prostitution, the duty we owe to ourselves and to the community, calls upon us to guard against the consequences, by detecting their misrepresentations and exposing their falsehoods.

I presume you will recollect the satisfaction both of us received some years ago when Mr. Burn first met us on the library committee, and I well remember the pleasure you expressed in the hope that he would prove an agreeable acquaintance. Little did I then imagine he could prove the virulent enemy to us both, which his Reply to your Appeal shows him to be. As to myself, though I have very frequently been in company with him since that period, I never received, or apprehended, the least incivility from him before the publication of this last pamphlet, in which I see with concern and surprise that I am made the subject of some of those malevolent sarcasms by which the book is distinguished. I cannot therefore but be anxious to engage your notice of them, and to have you informed of what I have to say in reply; and as I am in possession of a variety

of information relating to the subject of the riots, and connected with his book, I will detail some of it to you, that you may give the public such part as you think worth notice.

I have often been at a loss to account for the wide extension of the extravagant spirit of declamation and outrage upon the occasion under which we are suffering, and am surprised that Mr. Burn should so readily come forward to join in it, because I was informed that he thought well of the French revolution in the early stages of it. Surely then he should have shewn some consideration for those who still hold his former opinions, as it is possible they may not have the same reasons for abandoning them which have operated upon him. Much do I wish that he had attended to this, and to his character as a minister of peace, which ought to have prevented him from becoming an advocate in a scene of party discord, and a partizan in a business which has not only interrupted the safety and harmony of society, but disgraced the community in which it was transacted. However, as he has thought fit to become the champion of bigotry and the Don Quixote of the High Church party, and I think his motives cannot be mistaken, I sincerely hope he will not be suffered to triumph in his knight errant expedition.

The first part of his Reply, which I feel myself



particularly called upon to notice, relates to the advertisement respecting the hand-bill, which he and his friends have endeavoured to represent as one cause of the riots that followed, but which I verily believe would have no more contributed to them than the letter I am now writing to you, had it not been industriously circulated by them, and thereby rendered subservient to their own purpose of creating a disturbance. That hand-bill Mr. Burn tells us was sent to the minister by the magistrates. What more then was necessary for them, or for any one else of the party at Birmingham, to do with respect to it? and if nothing uncommon was meditated, why call out the clergy upon the occasion? Surely the advertisement which followed, offering the 100l. reward, would have been deemed sufficient without their interfering, or without any other signature than those of the magistrates. But I knew on Wednesday the 13th of July, that several others were added: for as I was riding into town on that evening, I accidentally met Mr. Carles on horseback, who immediately stopped, and addressed me as usual, in a very friendly manner, acquainting me with the advertisement which had been agreed upon, telling me that 100l. reward was offered to any one that would discover the author of the hand-bill, and adding that he had heard we denied any knowledge of, or connection with, the author, and that as he considered me as the ostensible

fible person for the party I belonged to, he had been much inclined to send the advertisement to me, that I might add my signature, but that upon second thoughts he had declined doing it, from motives of delicacy, not knowing how I might feel such an application.

For this friendly attention I made my acknowledgments, and added, that I thought myself obliged by his delicacy, but could assure him that I knew no more of the author than he did, nor had I the smallest suspicion who it was, and therefore sincerely wished he had sent me the paper, as I should have signed it without hesitation. To this he replied, that he was glad to hear me say so, and wished he had sent the advertisement, for he was sure I was his friend, and, let what would come, he would not hurt the hair of the head of myself or any of the sect I belonged to. This led me to say that possibly it might not be too late for me to add my name even then, and that if he approved it, and would give me leave, I would send Mr. Swinney orders to affix my name to the advertisement, and I would cheerfully pay my proportion towards the expence, should the offer be successful, and the 100*l.* paid in consequence of it. To this he freely assented, and added, that he wished I would, for I was his friend, I had been his friend, and, let what would happen, he would not hurt a hair of my head, no, he would not hurt a hair of my head, or of any of the sect that I belonged to.

The tone in which these words were repeated, and the attitude in which he rode, whilst repeating them, shewed me that he had been drinking, and (as usual) gone something beyond the bounds of temperance. But as he appeared very capable of riding home, I left him, not being at that time impressed with the same idea of the significance of these remarkable words that I have been since.

After reflecting on what had passed, and the condition of the person with whom I had the conversation, I was in doubt whether sending my name to the printer would not be deemed an intrusion by the other Gentlemen who had signed the advertisement. In consequence of this, as you will no doubt recollect, I called at Fair Hill, and consulted you as a friend, when you admitted the reasons I had to hesitate, but, upon the whole, thought with me, that it would be best for me to send my name, which I accordingly did by a note to Mr. Swinney, telling him that, in consequence of a conversation with Mr. Carles that evening, since the advertisement relating to the hand-bill was sent, I had been invited by him to add my name to it, that I had given my assent, and accordingly requested and authorised him to add it to the others already given in. Mr. Swinney's return to this note was a printed newspaper, which I received soon after nine o'clock, and which proved to me that he was much forwarder with the impression of his paper than I had



had any apprehension of; and also that the opportunity I thought myself in possession of was passed.

This circumstance, however, leads me to remark, that I gave an incontrovertible and renewed proof of my disposition as to the author of the hand-bill; and it also makes it very evident that some scheme had that day been talked of, and that the repeated declarations, that not a hair of our heads should be hurt, was the consequence of it\*. These words have very frequently and forcibly occurred to me since the riots happened, and I have had an opportunity of observing the direction in which the proceedings were conducted. It is now well known to me that a meeting had then been previously held at the house of a "*Church and King*" partizan for the purpose of considering how to punish these "*damn'd presbyterians*." These were his own words. It is well known to me that the rioters very frequently and publicly declared, that they had the justices' protection. It is also well known to me, to yourself, and to many others, that they had a regular list of the devoted houses. Nay, much more than this is known to me and others, though not yet made known to the public; but I trust it will in due time, and that it will appear to every one, that the Dissenters, so far from being such factious, turbulent, and

\* An association for burning our houses and places of worship might admit of a condition that our persons should be safe.

restless characters as they have of late so frequently been represented, have acted with a degree of forbearance and patience unparalleled in any similar instance. You well know it has not been for want of evidence that prosecutions have not been commenced, but because the Dissenters committed their cause to government, and expected redress from thence.

The next insinuation of Mr. Burn which I am concerned to notice is, that respecting the offer the Dissenters published of a reward of 100l. to any person who should discover the author of the handbill. This, he sneeringly observes, was not advertised, but was "*confined to a few corners of the streets in the town.*" Here again I must lament his want of candour or veracity, for his assertion is untrue. This offer was not confined to a few corners of the streets; it was printed with a type of the largest size, and upon paper in proportion; and particular directions were given that it should be pasted up in every part of the town where the proclamation, which offered the same reward, was put up. Nay more than this, it was also pasted up in the public streets at Worcester and Warwick, with the concurrence of the solicitor to the treasury, as soon as the assizes commenced. It is true that some insidious wretches very frequently pulled down these papers in Birmingham, as they did the king's proclamation, which offered 100l. to any one that would discover

cover

cover the authors and abettors of the riots. But that does not prove that either the one or the other had not been put up publicly, and very generally too.

I proceed now to the invidious charge in p. 54 and 55, aimed at myself through the means of Mr. Dadley, the master of the hotel. And here again it is necessary to expose Mr. Burn's want of attention, or else his wilful exaggeration of facts. In giving his pretended extract from my letter, he says, p. 54, " Mr. Dadley, it seems, recommended that " the dinner might be had as was intended—he was " sure there was no danger of tumult, provided the " gentlemen broke up early; *and, on this representation*, orders were given to the printer to suppress " the hand-bill, and *Mr. Dadley's measure* was " adopted."—Now, if you turn to my letter in the appendix of his own book, you may see that the words " and on this representation " are not in my letter, as he has quoted them; nor do I call it Mr. Dadley's measure. Surely after such wanton, unprovoked attacks upon private characters as his illiberal pages exhibit, he should have had a little more regard to circumspection. Mr. Dadley's "*solemn deposition*," for such Mr. Burn calls it, and such he would have the world suppose it to be (though it does not appear to me to have been made before any person authorised to take it), is contradicted by the testimony of every individual who was present at the conversation it alludes to; and I am fully persuaded that

Mr.



Mr. Dadley would not have interfered on the occasion at all, had he not been solicited by some of the leaders of the High Church party. To such miserable subterfuges and meannesses does party spirit carry men whom, in every other character, I can respect and esteem. Mr. Dadley has suffered so much that I pity him; and I have cheerfully joined with my patriotic compeers in giving him solid proof of it. But I shall not, in return, put him upon maligning others, or exposing himself by becoming the tool of a party, which it must be allowed is extremely ungenerous to require of a man in his situation of life. Against his single testimony I now place that of the three gentlemen present, who on the 1st of May last wrote to me the following note:

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Mr. Burn having introduced into his Reply to  
 “ Dr. Priestley's Appeal Mr. Dadley's account of a  
 “ conversation which he says took place on the  
 “ morning of the 14th of July, with a view to in-  
 “ validate your account of the transactions of that  
 “ day, we think it right to declare that the repre-  
 “ sentation there given is not a just one of what  
 “ passed between us.—Mr. Dadley was expressly  
 “ desired to tell us if he had the same reason to ap-  
 “ prehend a disturbance as when we saw him on  
 “ the Monday evening, to which he replied, that  
 “ he had not, and that he then had no fear respecting  
 “ it,

“ it, as he had heard nothing further about it. We  
 “ are fully persuaded that you could not have, in  
 “ giving your account, the most distant idea of  
 “ fixing any odium upon Mr. Dadley, or intending  
 “ to make him a party in the dinner. Mr. Dad-  
 “ ley was never considered as any way more con-  
 “ cerned in the transactions of that day, than when  
 “ he was preparing any other public dinner for the  
 “ various meetings held at his house.

“ We are, very respectfully,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your much obliged and obedient servants,

*Birmingham,*  
*May 1st, 1792.*

WILLIAM HUNT,  
 HARRY HUNT,  
 JOHN LAWRENCE.”

To this let me add, that I wish to ask Mr. Burn,  
 How long it has been the business of the clergy of  
 Birmingham to watch over the concerns of the pub-  
 licans there? If I have traduced, injured, or offended  
 Mr. Dadley, pray what have Mr. Burn and his  
 associated brethren of the cloth to do with it? If  
 any explanation was necessary between Mr. Dadley  
 and myself, it surely might have been easily settled  
 without this public, and I must say impertinent at-  
 tempt to calumniate me, which, though more ma-  
 levolent than his insinuations of modesty and diffi-  
 dence, is not less so than his insidious attempt to  
 represent the dinner as the cause of the riots. To his  
 sneer about modesty and diffidence I reply, that an  
 honest

honest man who has no other object than the public good, ought not to feel the diffidence of those who have venal purposes, selfish ends, or party views, in their public attendances. It is, however, entirely owing to an infirmity in my hearing, that I am not only obliged to place myself near the chair at public meetings, but to keep there, if I would contribute my mite towards promoting the general good. And that I have uniformly been governed by that object, and by that alone, in all my numerous and almost unceasing attendances upon public business, I now dare to aver, even in the face of the phrensy and intemperance with which myself and my friends are pursued.

Thus much for the impertinent attempt to represent me as assuming more than is becoming me. I will frankly confess, the character contained in another of his sarcastic sneers, gratifies me very highly, that of your "*zealous friend*." To be called the friend of Dr. Priestley, and to enjoy an intimacy with him, is an honour that I prize beyond estimation. And I rejoice in that zeal and activity to which this intimacy has led me, because it has ever been founded in benevolence, and had public usefulness for its object.

The friends of Church and King, as they call themselves, have burned my house, and driven me from the place which it had been my study to improve



prove for twenty-eight years successively, where I had fixed my earthly residence, and fondly imagined I had secured a retreat for the decline of life. But though I am thus deprived of my habitation, and driven from the spot in which I delighted, my principles are in every respect the same as before the riots. I am, and will be a truly independent man, a "*zealous friend*" of truth and liberty. I will still strive to attain the equal rights of a citizen, to which I know myself entitled; and I will always avail myself of every opportunity of serving the cause of truth and liberty.

The note at the bottom of p. 56 of Mr. Burn's Reply is, I presume, to be read as a declaration of Mr. Dadley's. But this (as well as my declaration in p. 55, of dining by myself, which is printed in italics) is so ambiguously expressed, that much attention is necessary to preserve the connexion. To the latter I do not deem it necessary to make any reply. But, to expose the former, and shew the incorrectness of the additional note above mentioned, I wish you to give the public the following declaration, which was signed soon after Mr. Burn's Reply appeared, and will shew that it was Mr. Dadley's windows only that were mentioned, and about which any apprehensions were entertained. The declaration Mr. Burn gives by Mr. Dadley, and that of all who were present at the time he refers to, is as follows, and I have contrasted it with that of all the gentlemen who were present at the time he refers to:

Mr. Burn's note, p. 56, *Declaration of Mr. Russell,*  
 containing Mr. Dad- &c.  
 ley's declaration.

" On the Monday pre-  
 " ceding I had informed  
 " Mr. William Hunt,  
 " Mr. Harry Hunt, Mr.  
 " William Russell, Mr.  
 " George Humphrys, and  
 " Mr. John Lawrence,  
 " who were met at my  
 " house that afternoon,  
 " that it was then gene-  
 " rally thought, if the  
 " dinner should be bad, it  
 " would create a general  
 " disturbance in the town.  
 " In answer to which they  
 " all promised to indem-  
 " nify me, provided any  
 " damages or loss should  
 " ensue in consequence of  
 " the dinner being bad."

" On the Monday even-  
 " ing previous to the  
 " 14th of July, when we  
 " were at the hotel, Mr.  
 " Dadley informed us  
 " that he had been told  
 " by a gentleman, that  
 " if the dinner was held  
 " at his house his win-  
 " dows would certainly  
 " be broken. We press-  
 " ed Mr. Dadley to give  
 " the name of this gen-  
 " tleman, as there seem-  
 " ed no doubt that if  
 " it so happened, this  
 " prophetic gentleman  
 " would either be the  
 " accomplisher of his  
 " own prophecy, or the  
 " employer of others for  
 " that purpose. Mr.  
 " Dadley, for reasons  
 " best known to him-  
 " self, absolutely refused  
 " naming him. Mr.  
 Dadley

"Dadley also mention-  
"ed that he had heard  
"a very exceptionable  
"hand-bill had been  
"circulated in the town,  
"but which not one  
"of us had at that time  
"seen.

"WILLIAM RUSSELL,  
"GEORGE HUMPHRYS,  
"HARRY HUNT,  
"JOHN LAWRENCE,  
"WILLIAM HUNT."

I cannot but think that two positions advanced by this declaration are worthy of attention, viz. that the parties in question had no idea of any indemnification but what related to Mr. Dadley's windows, as he never so much as mentioned any other object of apprehension; and that we had not on Monday evening any of us seen a copy of the famous hand-bill, of which we have since heard so much. Mr. Dadley, as I have already observed, has received a substantial proof of our sympathy, and found us superior to the little subterfuge of sheltering ourselves under a plea that our promise extended to his windows only, although we never gave him any other. I pity Mr. Dadley, and wish he had suffered less. I never intended to hold him up

K

as



as the cause of having the dinner; and therefore with my letter written in London had been more guarded in that particular. But the extreme hurry in which it was penned, and the assurance which, immediately upon my return home, I gave Mr. Dadley of my intentions respecting it, would, I am persuaded, have satisfied him entirely, had he not been goaded on by the High Church partisans to let them use his name as they have done. All my acquaintance well know that I never concealed my singular exertions in promoting the dinner; and had I conceived that there had been any thing illegal or unjustifiable, either in the dinner or the toasts, I should scarcely have personally avowed myself an advocate both for the one and the other, to his majesty's ministers, and delivered them the original list of toasts, as it was transcribed for the press. But the fact really was so; and this list was in their hands when the infamous libel in the paper called *The Times* was published\*.

It was this circumstance, and this alone, which

\* This libel, as published in the *Times* on the 19th July, was as follows, viz. "By every account which has arrived from Birmingham, and from authenticated facts in corroboration of what we have already inserted, it is an indisputable truth, that the motives which occasioned the havoc already made amongst the Dissenters at Birmingham, and which is still making, solely sprung from the loyalty of the people. The public were determined, before they proceeded to violence, to have some further proof of the intention of those commemoration men; they therefore waited until they heard what was said at table. They had, indeed, their suspicions; and those suspicions, after the first course, were realised by the following toast being drunk, "Destruction to the present government—and the king's head in a charger."

occasioned that extreme hurry which I see Mr. Burn had been acquainted with previous to the publication of his book; and has treated with a want of candour on the occasion which I hope it will never be in the power of any man to lay to my charge. Be this as it may, the libellous paper in *The Times* above mentioned, was published on Tuesday the 19th of July, when under an expectation of another audience of the ministers, and receiving from them my list of the toasts on the afternoon of that day, my answer to it was promised for Wednesday's paper. I was, however, disappointed in the expected audience with the ministers on Tuesday; but although I had an appointment, and attended on Wednesday, yet I could not return from the Treasury till near two o'clock, and I knew the answer must necessarily be written, and be delivered at the printer's by three, if it was to appear in the paper of that day, which I had engaged it should. Nay, so much was I pressed for time upon my return from the ministers, that though I hastily wrote, I could not transcribe, the letter, but was obliged to hasten with it myself to the printer's in its rough state, that I might enable the compositor to set it for that day's paper. Now, whatever Mr. Burn may do, I think every candid person who recollects the time and circumstances in which I wrote, will feel little difficulty in making due allowance for any inaccuracy which appears in a letter written in such a short and truly *agitating* period.

I will therefore rely upon this candour, and go on to observe, that in p. 118 Mr. Burn criticises, with his usual acrimony, upon the toasts, and gives an addition to the 9th toast, "The Prince of Wales." I have no objection at all to this addition. It was, however, added by the chairman, and is not in the original list. But the explanation that respectable gentleman has already given the public upon this subject renders it needless for me to say any more.

As to the meeting breaking up without the least riot or disturbance, which, by way of emphasis, Mr. Burn again prints in italics (see his book, p. 120), I repeat the assertion I made before, "that it did so." I again aver it to be true, and being called upon for proof, I refer to the company that dined, with a very small exception. I am obliged, however, to make that, because I was repeatedly told, and informed you of the same long ago, that one man was sent by the party to the dinner purposely to insult yourself, and by that means begin a riot within doors, which was happily prevented by your not being at the dinner as they expected.—It is true two of the gentlemen who came from a distance, and on horseback, went out at the back door, as the readiest way to their horses, and I believe were afterwards followed by some of the mob; but neither myself, nor the company in general, who went out together at the front door, met with any rioters, or the least annoyance in leaving



leaving the hotel; and in repeatedly walking the streets some hours afterwards I did not perceive any disturbance, nor the appearance of any; neither did I ever hear of those two gentlemen, who went out at the back door, being molested till some time after Mr. Burn's book was published, and occasioned conversation upon the subject. My own opinion is, that no disturbance would have happened, had not uncommon measures been used to promote it.

In reply to what Mr. Burn advances respecting the short address I took the liberty of adding to our chairman's, upon the breaking up of the company, I say, that if any part of it was lost through the "perturbed state" of the company, as he reports, it is more than I know of. I certainly did lament to them that the people out of doors were so much misled as to be brought to insult us as we came to dinner; but I uttered every word I wished to say upon the subject; and nothing which I should be unwilling to repeat again at any time. I shall only add further upon this topic, that the parties who dined together at the hotel on the 14th of July, may with the utmost propriety appeal to the whole tenor of their conduct, both before and since the riots, for the refutation of the various calumnies which have been industriously circulated concerning their views in holding that meeting.

As to the criminality of that convivial meeting, it is presumed that this will not be advanced by any one, even in the paroxysm of passion. But as Mr. Burn chooses to describe this dinner as the cause of the subsequent riots, it may be observed, that as the chairman was a member of the establishment, and many others of this class attended, if this dinner was the irritating cause, how came it to pass that the first object of the rioters should be a meeting-house where Dr. Priestley preached, who had nothing to do with the dinner? With more propriety still it may be demanded, what was the reason that those gentlemen who were publicly known to have been the first and most active in promoting the dinner, were the last to suffer in the depredations committed? Mr. John Ryland, Mr. Hutton, and Mr. Taylor, were none of them at the dinner, and yet so violent was the fury against the last, that it was currently reported, and believed among the mob, as well as others, that every mill and farm-house which were known to belong to him were threatened; and of a list which contained seventy-two or seventy-three houses that were marked to be destroyed, it is known that the number belonging to this gentleman formed a very large proportion of the whole; whilst myself, though amongst the first at the dinner, was one of the last that suffered. And how is it to be accounted for, that, of twelve houses that have been destroyed,  
only

only three of the whole number belonged to gentlemen who dined, and not one to any member of the establishment?

Here I think it may be proper to observe, that I have supported a public character in the town of Birmingham for more than twenty years, and have ever been disposed to distinguish myself as a friend to the public interest of the community. In this character it was that I felt myself impelled to promote the dinner on the 14th of July, on the principles both of humanity and of commerce. I have sufficiently declared myself a friend to humanity in the hand-bill that preceded the dinner. It did not seem politic to give the commercial reasons to the public. But I now state, that, as a friend to the town, I thought myself particularly called upon to promote the dinner, because I well knew that the trade it enjoyed with France, which was one of its most valuable branches, was in danger of suffering very materially from the spirit of discontent which the commercial treaty had very generally occasioned in France. And because I well knew that the patriotic popular party there were so much affected by this spirit of dissatisfaction, that they were forming associations, and by their example promoting the disuse of English manufactures.

I also knew that this circumstance had alarmed



some of the first commercial characters in Birmingham. I thought nothing so likely to do away this threatening evil as to testify, in a season of conviviality, a friendly disposition towards this, the first nation in Europe, by rejoicing in its emancipation from despotism, and in its resolutions to live in peace with all mankind. I thought nothing more likely to promote a spirit of concord than applauding their declaration, that they would never go to war any more for the sake of conquest. I have always thought peace and commerce very closely connected, and therefore conceived it my duty, as a sincere friend to both, and as a good citizen, to rejoice publicly in this solemn harbinger of both to this country. But when it appeared that my views and those of my friends were misrepresented by some of our neighbours, and misconceived by others, we who were concerned in promoting the dinner joined in publishing an advertisement which ought to have satisfied every reasonable person of our attachment to our present constitution at home; and which would no doubt have done it, had not many calumnies been circulated, and much exertion been made to prevent it by those who are the real authors and abettors of this mischief\*.

Had

\* *Birmingham Commemoration of the French Revolution.*

Several handbills having been circulated in the town which can only be intended to create distrust concerning the intentions of the meeting, to disturb its harmony, and inflame the minds of the people,

Had there not been particular measures used at Birmingham, the dinner there would no doubt have passed over in peace, as it did in every other place in the kingdom where they were held. In no place whatever was the commercial part of the community so much interested in celebrating this festival as at Birmingham. The value of the commerce of France with this town and neighbourhood should not be publicly estimated. When the late commercial treaty was pending, the minister was particularly solicited to prevent any calculation of its value being made, lest its magnitude should be communicated to the French, and impede the treaty. I can assert, however, from the best authority, that one house alone (which was among those that were most desirous of promoting the dinner) has exported to France to the amount of some millions of the manufactures of the town and neighbourhood of Birmingham. Yet, extraordinary as it may seem, in a town thus interested has the only disturbance of the festivity of this memorable day been found. Through the whole kingdom besides all was peace: and yet that it

people, the gentlemen who proposed it think it necessary to declare their entire disapprobation of all such handbills, and their ignorance of the authors. Sensible themselves of the advantages of a free government, they rejoice in the extension of liberty to their neighbours, at the same time avowing, in the most explicit manner, their firm attachment to the constitution of their own country, as vested in the three estates of King, Lords, and Commons: surely no *free-born Englishman* can refrain from exulting in this addition to the general mass of human happiness.—It is the cause of *humanity*;—it is the cause of the people.

*Birmingham, July, 13, 1791.*

would

would not be so here, several persons besides the gentleman Mr. Dadley mentioned, it now appears, ventured to foretel before the day arrived. The industrious circulation of Dr. Tatham's inflammatory letter, which was distributed gratis in the public houses of the town, the advertisement which was published with the words "Incendiary refuted" at the head of it, the impertinent insult of an anonymous bigot who advertised, that he would publish a list of the names of those who dined at the hotel upon a black page in white letters, though all of them were measures manifestly calculated to promote a disturbance, they would, I believe, have been ineffectual, if the magistrates had not continued in town, and seen without resisting some among the mob insult the gentlemen as they came to the hotel to the dinner; and if other principal gentlemen too, who placed themselves upon the steps of Mr. Brooke's house, the very next to the hotel, had not been seen to encourage rather than discountenance the people. Without some extraordinary exertions to mislead the people they could not possibly have taken offence at any thing that was said or done by the parties who met and dined.

The advertisements that preceded the dinner were as explicit as could be penned. The toasts and the songs, too, were such as the people would, I am persuaded, have most cheerfully encored, had they been



been left to follow the dictates of their own honest hearts, and to consult their own feelings only. Nay, not a man among the High Church party itself, I should think, could have refused to join in the closing lines of the song that was prepared for the occasion, which were :

“ Let each loyal Briton then joyfully sing,

“ The blessings of freedom, and long live the king.”

Is this language inconsistent with the public professions of attachment to the constitution held out in the advertisement? Is it not sufficiently declaratory to amount of itself to a full proof to every impartial person, that the meeting has been basely calumniated, and that it has only been used as an ostensible occasion of persecuting and vilifying the Dissenters? And yet what is it that has been alleged against them? Many indeed have been the frivolous charges against yourself, who justly stand so conspicuous among us; but against the body of Dissenters what do all the charges that have been offered amount to?

Mr. Madan has sedulously endeavoured to give a serious alarm founded upon our proceedings to obtain a repeal of the test laws. But that gentleman's apprehensions were totally groundless. Had we entertained any unbecoming or illegal intentions, we should not have regularly published our proceedings to the world; but this has been our practice. No  
resolutions,

resolutions, as far as I ever knew, or heard of, have been formed at any of those meetings but what are before the public. I will venture to add, there are none passed upon the late attempt, but what are in every degree equalled in spirit and firmness by those which were passed upon former occasions, in prosecuting the attempt to obtain relief from the penalties to which Dissenters were subject for keeping schools, in which, though repeatedly unsuccessful at first, we were at last happy enough to be redressed.

If Mr. Burn and his brethren have any instances of disloyalty to charge us with, any acts of disaffection to the state to accuse us of, let them bring them forth; let the charge be made. When the advertisement expressing our loyalty and attachment to the government of this kingdom was published on the 14th of July, what was further necessary to prove us good citizens? Was it becoming us, who were conscious of none but upright motives, and undisguised actions, to be deterred from an innocent purpose by a dread of the machinations of those who we were told had been secretly plotting mischief against us? Surely not.

After expressing myself thus unreservedly upon real facts, you will easily imagine with what feelings I read Mr. Burn's modest insinuation of the activity of the magistrates. He says, p. 44, "They  
" staid

“ staid in town for the express purpose of interposing their authority, *should any attempt be made to break the peace.*” If it was so, why did they not interfere when they both heard and saw the notorious insults offered to some of the gentlemen as they went into the hotel? What did they do in this, the supposed origin of the business? What did they, when in the evening they saw the two meeting-houses and your house destroyed? Did they make any extraordinary constables, or enter upon any other spirited opposition? No: while the meeting houses were still burning, and the mob destroying your furniture and your house, they both returned home, and went very peaceably to bed; and when two respectable gentlemen went over to them at my request early the next morning, one of them expressed much anger at being called out of his bed. And yet the “ diffident” Mr. Burn very modestly represents the merit of the magistrates as approved and sanctioned by one of the most numerous and respectable town meetings that was ever convened in Birmingham, and says the only proof of delinquency on the part of the magistrates was their want of success\*. A striking proof, indeed, this scene affords of the *faithful discharge of their duty!* as Mr. Burn declares it; and, that he may not lose the full emphasis of the words, he prints them in italics. I confess, however,

\* Will Mr. Burn say that the magistrates were neither of them intoxicated with liquor, in the course of the first evening of this interesting and disgraceful event?

that,



that, before this scene of outrage, I never heard of an instance wherein a magistrate "*faithfully discharging his duty*," in quelling a mob, when addressing the rioters, whom he found in the very act of pulling down a house, should desire them to "*take care not to hurt one another*." And yet this is one among many other proofs furnished upon the present occasion. I think it renders all others superfluous. Otherwise many more equally in point might be mentioned, as well as the following singular fact, viz. that throughout the whole of the late scene, though the justices personally attended at your house, and at several other houses, whilst the rioters were destroying and burning them, the Riot Act was never once read, or even attempted to be read\*.

But probably you may have already been informed of this through another channel. I will not therefore detain you any longer, for I fear you must already have thought this letter too long. But as in writing it I have not been actuated by any desire of criminating others, or retorting their malevolent calumnies, I hope you will excuse its prolixity, or any little degree of warmth that may appear in this attempt in justification of myself, to which I have steadily endeavoured to confine my remarks. For after all that I have suffered, and am still suffering, I can truly say that I am more dis-

\* A striking contrast this to the repeated readings of this Act when the brothels were in danger.

posed to pity, than to criminate the authors and abettors of it. Their season of reflection, I hope, is approaching, and I would by no means retard it by any irritating reflections. I therefore most cheerfully close this letter with my best wishes for the restoration of that peace and good neighbourhood which reigned amongst us at Birmingham previous to this truly unexpected and cruel interruption of it; and I am confident nothing will be wanting to promote it that can *consistently* be required at the hands of the Dissenters.

Believe me, with more respect, gratitude, and affection, than I can express,

Dear Sir,

Most sincerely and truly yours,

Birmingham,  
Aug. 20, 1792.

WILLIAM RUSSELL.





## APPENDIX.



### *The Rev. Mr. Scholefield's Advertisement relating to the Sunday Schools at Birmingham.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BIRMINGHAM GAZETTE.

SIR,

AS Mr. Burn, in his reply to Dr. Priestley's Appeal, hath, in the most confident and even exulting manner, charged the Doctor with a gross and culpable mis-statement of facts, in relation to the Sunday Schools in this town, and asserts, that the resolution of allowing the children of Dissenters to attend their own places of worship never was rescinded; you will be doing an act of justice by inserting the following paragraph, copied from the Birmingham Gazette, dated October 2, 1786, and greatly oblige,

Your humble servant,

RADCLIFFE SCHOLEFIELD.

" Public Office, Sept. 26, 1786.

" *At a General Meeting of the Subscribers to the Sun-  
day Schools in Birmingham, held here this Evening,*

" REV. MR. CURTIS IN THE CHAIR.

" IT being represented to this meeting, that several gentlemen have threatened to withdraw their subscriptions to the Sunday Schools, in consequence of an

L

" alteration

“ alteration of the general rules made at the request of the  
 “ Dissenters, on Friday, the 10th of March, 1786: Re-  
 “ solved, that the resolution granting that request (which  
 “ the Dissenters themselves have not availed themselves of,  
 “ and adhered to as they engaged) be rescinded; and that  
 “ in future the rules, as they originally stood, be steadily  
 “ attended to.”

Who ought not to have been ignorant now?

*See Burn's Pamphlet, p. 11.*

P. S. As you, sir, frequently admit original essays, or extracts from other authors, you will probably indulge me with room for a few reflections upon the foregoing extract, and Mr. Burn's extreme negligence and inattention in respect to it.—What was meant in the resolution, by the Dissenters having not availed themselves of it, or attended to it, as they engaged? I believe they are wholly uninformed to this day. Perfectly satisfied with having removed so illiberal a restriction (a restriction unknown in any place I have heard of, where the Establishment and Dissenters had united in support of Sunday Schools, and a confirmation of what Dr. Priestley has observed concerning the unhappy spirit prevailing in this town), I never heard of their giving themselves any farther concern about it. I much question whether a Dissenter ever recommended an object, much less insisted upon their attending a place of worship among the Dissenters; if they did, I have no doubt of their being attended to by their patron. Of this I am firmly persuaded, that the rescinding of the resolution was the primary cause of setting up Sunday Schools amongst themselves, as separate from the Establishment. In Sheffield, I am informed, the subscriptions go all into one stock, from whence the masters and mistresses of the distinct societies are regularly paid, and why the same plan

plan could not have been adopted here (except the spirit had prevailed which Mr. Burn so confidently denies to have an existence) I leave the public to form their opinion and judgment.—How Mr. Burn could have been ignorant of a fact so easy to be proved must be left to him, and he can best explain. From his ignorance however in this instance the public will be ready to infer that his coadjutors (in whose defence he writes) have left him, as we say, in the lurch, or that, however he blames Dr. Priestley, as a false accuser of the brethren, he is the first person upon whom (from a certain undeniable fact) the character can at present rest. They will likewise be enabled to judge what degree of credit is to be given to the other parts of his performance, which, I have no doubt, are either in whole, or in part, capable of the same refutation; but, as Mr. Burn calls upon Dr. Priestley himself, to him I shall refer the farther part of the business, only observing, that even Mr. Burn's friends may now be ready to exclaim, and he himself feel in part the force of the exclamation in the words of Juvenal:

*Seu tu magno discrimine causam,*

*Protegere affectas, te consule, dic tibi quis sis.*

Ere thou attempt weak causes to support,

Be sure, be very sure, thou'rt able for't.

*Creech's Translation.*



## No. II.

*Extract from the original Advertisement relating to the  
Public Library at Birmingham.*

Birmingham Library, Dec. 9, 1789.

LEST any person should mistake the nature of this library, it is thought proper to give the following general account of it.—This library is formed on the plan of one that was first established at Liverpool, and which has been since adopted at Manchester, Leeds, and many other considerable towns in the kingdom. The books are never to be sold; and, from the nature of the institution, the library must increase till it contains all the most valuable publications in the English language; and from the easy terms of admission, it will be a treasure of knowledge both to the present and all succeeding ages.

As all the books are bought by a committee of persons annually chosen by a majority of the subscribers, and every vote is by ballot, this institution can never answer the purpose of any party, civil or religious; but, on the contrary, may be expected to promote a spirit of liberality and friendship among all classes of men without distinction.

## No. III.

*An Address to the Subscribers to the Birmingham Library on the Subject of Mr. Cooke's Motion, to restrict the Committee in the Choice of Books, with a View to exclude Controversial Divinity.*

## MR. COOKE'S MOTION.

MANY of the Subscribers to this very useful institution are much concerned to see a spirit of controversy creeping into the library, by the purchase of so many books in religious disputes; books of no real use, and after the present moment mere lumber: they are read but by a particular few, and do not answer the purpose of the original intention, which was to collect a body of useful and instructive literature for the use of posterity, as well as the present time.

Doctor Priestley, the learned author of many of the books, is of that spirited and generous turn of mind, and has the success of this library so much at heart, that, if he thought them necessary or proper, he, as the writer, would present them.

It is requested that the committee will at present order no more of those books until the sense of the whole subscribers shall be known at the next general annual meeting.

It is likewise proposed to the next general annual meeting to make a motion for a law to exclude in future all books of *controversial divinity*.

*To the Subscribers to the Birmingham Library.*

GENTLEMEN,

AS this motion (which I have not been able to prevent being brought before you, at your next general meeting) appears to me to be of considerable consequence, affecting one of the first principles of the constitution of our library, viz. restricting the committee in their choice of books, and I am particularly appealed to in it, I take the liberty to address you on the subject, and to give you my reasons why I think it highly improper that it should pass into a law. I choose to do it in this manner, because it is well known, that on several accounts, nothing can be discussed with advantage in a large assembly; and by this means you will have an opportunity of considering the matter coolly, and of being better qualified to vote with judgment on the question.

When you have attended to my reasons, be assured, that I shall acquiesce in your determination, whatever it may be. The library, injured as I cannot help thinking it will be, by the proposed change in its constitution, will still be of great value to the town and neighbourhood, and deserving of the encouragement of all the friends of literature. And, though overruled, I shall not even be out of humour with any of the subscribers, and least of all with the institution itself. For the greater distinctness, I shall digest what I have to propose to your consideration under separate heads, and I beg your dispassionate attention to each of them.

I. The object of the institution is to provide a stock of such books as any of the subscribers may wish to read, or to consult. All other libraries of this kind throughout England



land are, I believe, upon the same liberal and extensive plan, no subjects whatever being excluded.

It has, indeed, been said, that it is contrary to the original design of the institution to admit books of *religious controversy*. But I desire to see the evidence of this. Your printed *laws*, and also your *periodical advertisements*, which were all drawn up by myself, say nothing on the subject. If we look back to the history of the library, we shall find two epochas, viz. the first institution, in the year before I came to Birmingham, and in the year after, the new modelling of its constitution according to the plan of that of Leeds. Those who were concerned in the first plan say, that when it was proposed by some person to exclude books relating to the three professions, the motion was absolutely rejected. The new modelling of the constitution was, in a great measure, made by myself; and I am sure it was not my intention, or that of any who acted with me, to exclude interesting publications of any description whatever.

II. The proposed regulation is unnecessary. For if any evil whatever exist in the conduct of the library, the constitution of it is such, as that a sufficient remedy is always provided in the method of choosing the committee, since they are annually chosen by the subscribers at large. Nothing, therefore, can be wanted but more *attention* in the subscribers in choosing the committee, and in the committee when they are chosen. It is always deemed wrong to alter a regulation that is generally useful for the sake of a particular inconvenience. The time may come when the subscribers in general shall change their opinion, and then they will wish for an administration, like the present, which will always change with themselves.

III. The committee should consider themselves as representing the subscribers at large, and, without consulting their own inclination, endeavour to oblige as many of them

as they can, and *all* if possible. It has been the custom to order books which it was well known could interest only a *few* of the body. But it was thought that even a few had a right to be gratified, if it could be done without a disproportionate expence.

IV. The readers of theology among the subscribers to this library are more numerous, and more respectable, than the author of the motion imagines, and they think they have a right to be gratified even to a greater extent than they hitherto have been; considering that, of perhaps seven or eight hundred pounds that have been expended in the purchase of books, the price of all the publications objected to has not been five pounds. As far as I can judge, the principal controverſy to which thoſe books relate is not likely to produce many more expensive publications, and another controverſy, equally interesting, may not ariſe in many years.

V. It has been ſaid that, by the introduction of books of controverſy, the Diſſenters only will be gratified. This is by no means true; many members of the church of England being as much friends to free enquiry (and wiſhing to have the means of promoting it in this library) as any Diſſenters. But admitting this to be the caſe, it ſhould be conſidered that the founders of the inſtitution were all Diſſenters; as they have been, I believe, of almoſt every inſtitution of the ſame nature through the kingdom. Some reſpect is, therefore due to them, and to their liberality, in purpoſely conſtituting the library in ſuch a manner, as that their particular influence muſt neceſſarily be excluded, whenever they ſhould be, as they now are, a minority.

VI. Books of controverſy have, farther, been objected to, as being of a *temporary* nature. But it has been the conſtant cuſtom to buy any books, or pamphlets, on interesting ſubjects, however *temporary*. And it is deſirable that

that this library should be a repository for things of this kind, as they are often curious, and persons have occasion sometimes to look back to them.

VII. The controversy that I am now carrying on with the learned defenders of the doctrine of the Trinity, grows every day more interesting, especially as it has gained the attention of the two universities. The publications relating to it are, I believe, in most, if not *all*, the libraries of the same nature with this; and it would be very extraordinary indeed, if they should be excluded from this of Birmingham only, where it may well be supposed that more attention will be drawn to them. My controversy with the Jews also promises to be highly interesting, as it actually engages the attention of the Jewish nation in all parts of Europe, and is the only one that ever has done it.

VIII. The works that have been chiefly complained of, viz. the *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, and that of *Early Opinions concerning Christ*, are not of a *temporary* nature, but a collection of materials, which will be useful in future time, if they be of any use at present. In the former of them, there are not more than *two* articles, out of a great number, that can give the least offence to any Protestant who is not a Calvinist. And one part of it is a defence of Christianity, in answer to Mr. Gibbon, whose history is in the library.

IX. It is observed in the proposed motion, that if I had thought my own controversial writings proper for the library, I would have presented them to it. In answer to this I must say, that I should very readily have made a present of them, but that I thought it would be objected to, as a method of obtruding them upon the library. I also imagined that it was not the *price* of the books, but the *books* themselves, that were objected to.

So far, however, have I been from being forward to introduce



introduce books of religious controversy, that for two years I prevented the introduction of my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* into the library. This at that time gave offence to many, and it was said, that my motive for it was to promote the sale of the work in the town. At the same time I repeatedly said in the committee, that, whenever the funds of the society should be sufficiently ample (as they now certainly are) I should have no objection to publications in any interesting controversy, provided the choice was impartial, so that no favour was shewn to any one party more than to another.

When the above mentioned work was ordered, it was entirely unknown to me, and much against my will, by members of the church of England. A particular friend of mine (Mr. Russell) being present, and knowing my wishes, voted against it. I will add that it is very possible I might have used my endeavours much longer to keep out of the library every book of this nature, if it had not been for the unreasonable offence that was taken at the ordering of that work, by several of the clergy, their intemperate, and, I will take the liberty to say, their childish behaviour, on the occasion. Whether this change of my conduct, in these circumstances, was natural or justifiable, I appeal to the feelings of any man. I never took any measure to introduce any publication of mine except the *Letters to Dr. Horne*, &c. when they had been rejected, and the answer to them admitted, which I thought an uncandid and unfair proceeding. I also recommended the *Theological Repository*, of which I am the publisher. But this was necessary to the controversies already introduced. It is, besides, a work open to all parties. It contains several articles against Socinianism, and many others that must give the greatest satisfaction to all the friends of Christianity, of every denomination.

When

When my work, contrary to my wishes, was introduced, I proposed *Dr. Horsley's Answers*; and I have constantly voted for every thing written against myself.

X. They who have objected the most to the introduction of books of controversy are the *clergy*, no doubt thinking such books improper for the perusal of the subscribers to this library. But they distributed a pamphlet, entitled, *A Preservative against Socinianism*, to all who were confirmed at the late visitation. And, if controversial treatises be proper for the perusal of boys and girls, or of their parents, they certainly cannot be improper for the subscribers to this library. This conduct looks as if they were not controversial treatises in general that they objected to, but those only in which their peculiar opinions were opposed; and that they could not decently decide against those on one side of the question without rejecting *all*. I would not be uncandid; but I appeal to all that are candid, whether this be not the most natural construction of their conduct, and whether it does not betray a suspicion of the influence of reason and argument, and a dread of free inquiry.

XI. Others hate *religious controversy* because they hate *religion*, having no belief in Christianity. These will vote with the friends of the established church, whatever it be, in all such questions as these, but on very different principles. If there be any such among us, they ought, in decency, to decline giving any vote at all. Otherwise their conduct will be the same with that of the dog in the manger. They will neither read any books relating to religion themselves, nor suffer others to read them.

XII. No objection was made to several books of controversy before my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* was voted into the library, such as *Mr. White's Sermons*, and *Mr. Howes's Observations on Books*, which are all controversial,

troverfial. And both thefe writers are among my antagonifts.

XIII. The committee will be unfpeakably embarrassed by diftinguifhing books of controverfy from others, and many works, highly valuable on other accounts, are in part fo. If controverfy be *wholly* excluded, we muft even have no Reviews, and no Gentleman's Magazine.

Under the description of *religious controverfy* may fall many publications which the fubfcribers in general would wifh to fee. If, for inftance, Mr Gibbon fhould refume his attack on the evidences of Chriftianity, and an Englifh bifhop, as has been the cafe, fhould undertake the defence of it, muft fuch interefting publications be excluded from fuch a library as ours, becaufe they are *religious controverfy*? In fuch a cafe as this (and many other fuch might be mentioned) the law would either be repealed, or, which is always a bad thing, would be explained away, and evaded.

This is a *fuppofed* cafe, but I fhall mention two *real* ones, to fhew how improper, if not impoffible, it will be for any committee to act as the friends of the motion would have them. At one of our late meetings a clergyman whom I truly refpect propofed to us *Father Courayer's Declaration of his laft Sentiments concerning Religion*; and certainly a publication of fo much curiofity, and fo much talked of, was highly proper for our library. Accordingly it was voted unanimoufly. But it is, in fact, a book of *controverfial divinity* (which is fo much the bugbear at prefent), for the author gives his reafons for all his opinions, efpecially on the fubject of the *Trinity*, and appears to have died an Unitarian.

On the other hand, at our laft meeting, the fecond part of my *Letters to a Philofophical Unbeliever*, which I fcruple not to fay is one of the moft valuable of all my publications,



tions, and the most proper for the library, was rejected, though it is a custom (and I believe was never departed from before) to admit all *continuations* of works once voted in without any balloting at all, not to say, that, in other similar institutions, it is a rule to receive any publication of a subscriber, whatever it be. I was present, and declined giving any vote on the occasion; only observing, that the book did not relate to the doctrine of the Trinity, and therefore that they did not need to be afraid of it. Fear, however, the fear of some lurking mischief, prevailed. No *reasons* were given, but a sufficient number of silent and decisive *votes*.

XIV. Some persons are, or affect to be, alarmed lest this dispute should break up the library. I have no such apprehensions. It is so well constituted as to be able to bear much more than this. Should the subscribers at large, after mature consideration, not only admit the motion, but repeal the most fundamental law of the constitution, by throwing out of the library any of the books that were regularly voted into it, I shall acquiesce; trusting that in due time good temper, and good sense, will resume their natural influence. For, though *prejudice* may have more apparent strength, and act with more violence, *reason* has better stamina, and will outlive it.

As some things are best illustrated by comparisons, I hope no offence will be taken at the following. Suppose a number of gentlemen agree to have an annual public dinner, and appoint stewards to conduct the entertainment. These officers, considering the number, and consequently the different tastes, of those for whom they have to provide, besides such substantial boiled and roasted meat as suits every body, and also fish, venison, and turtle, which many like, but seldom see, may think proper to add a dessert, consisting of ices, syllabubs, sweetmeats, &c. and likewise

think

think

think it not amiss, on such an occasion, to introduce such things as *olives*, &c. which, though not generally relished, *some* fancy.

If, on seeing this dessert, any of the company should say, "I dislike these olives, and wish they might not be introduced;" would he not be thought very unreasonable. If he should say, he was confident that not one tenth part of the company would taste them; might it not be said, that even a tenth, or a much smaller proportion, of the company, had a right to be obliged in such a trifle. He might say, that olives were unwholesome, and unfit for any body to eat. But might it not be replied, that neither himself, nor any body else, was obliged to eat of them, and that others ought to judge for themselves. If he should say, "But my money is expended on this absurd article, which I think a great hardship;" it might be replied, that the money of the rest of the company was expended on things that were agreeable to himself, and, perhaps, only a few others.

He might add, "olives will do my wife, or my children, hurt, and I would not bring them into temptation." But it might be replied, "Sir, you must take the best care you can of your wife and children. This is not the only place in which they will be in danger of seeing olives, or hearing of them." Perhaps, heated by the altercation, he might add, "If these abominable olives be admitted, though they should not cost a groat, I and my friends will absolutely kick down the table, demolish the furniture of the room, and prevent any body from dining here any more;" would not a sensible friend tell him, that if this was a point on which he laid so much stress, he would do well to decline being of the party, and avoid all public dinners, where he would always be in danger of meeting with these offensive olives.

I would be far from insinuating by this comparison, that books of religious controversy resemble such a trifle as *olives* in a dessert, except with respect to the small *expence* attending them. Religious truth is, in itself, invaluable; and that the investigation of it is as pleasing to an ingenious mind as that of any philosophical truth, I appeal to those who are acquainted with both. Others cannot be competent judges in the case. They despise what they do not understand.

I shall conclude this address with observing, that it is merely as a friend to the library, and the reputation of it (which I really think will be materially affected by any measure that would restrict the committee in the choice of books) that I wish to prevent the motion from passing into a law. As the author of the publications principally objected to, I should be most gratified by their being excluded altogether, as this circumstance would draw much more attention upon them, and make them more generally read than they would otherwise be.

Submitting these observations to your candid attention,

I am, Gentlemen,

Your humble servant,

Birmingham,  
Aug. 14, 1787.

J. PRIESTLEY.

——— *Si quid novisti rectius istis  
Candidus imperti.*



## No. IV.

*Extract from the free Address to Protestant Dissenters;  
as such.*

IT is also natural for the Dissenters to wish well to every mild administration, which secures to them their privileges, and opposes the attempts of a bigoted and headstrong multitude, of clergy or laity, to oppress them. For the same reason, too, when the country, by its established laws, favours the interest of the Dissenters, so that they have a *legal right* to their privileges, they naturally consider *their country*, and *its laws*, as their guardians, and will strenuously oppose all the encroachments of the prerogative on the constitution, and on the rights of the subjects in general. For they must be sensible, that the established laws of a free community must be a better security for their privileges than the will of any single man whatever. They have too much at stake to be willing to hold it on so precarious a tenure.

It also clearly follows, from the same principle of *self-interest*, independent of gratitude, that the more indulgence Dissenters meet with from the government, the stronger will be their attachment to it. Though, therefore, it should seem proper to the legislature to give a preference to one mode of religion, by a legal provision for the maintenance of its ministers, it is clearly for its interest to attach all Dissenters to it, as much as possible, by a participation of *civil privileges*; and it is both injustice, and bad policy, in civil governors, to debar themselves from the service of men of ability and integrity, and, at the same time, to alienate their affections, by such an *opprobrious exclusion* from civil honours.

Yet, though I think it right that these things should be  
publicly

publicly said, that they may have weight with those whom it may concern, far would I be from encouraging the least tendency towards disaffection in the Dissenters to the present constitution of England. Imperfect as it is, and hard as the present laws bear upon us Dissenters in some respects; our situation in England is, upon the whole, such as we have great reason to be thankful to divine providence for, being abundantly more eligible than it would be in any other country in the world; and it is not so desirable to obtain even a just right by clamour and contention, as by the continuance of a prudent and peaceable behaviour.

This may convince our legislators, that we are deserving of their indulgence. Men who harbour no resentment, though under a restraint, of the injustice and unreasonableness of which they are fully sensible, must be possessed of generosity enough to be capable of the most grateful and firm attachment to the hand that frees them from the restraint. If a man have magnanimity enough not to bear malice against an enemy, much more will he be susceptible of a generous zeal for his friend.

Besides, though, from a regard to the honour and interest of our country, it is to be wished that Dissenters might be admitted to all civil offices of honour and trust, in common with others, their fellow-subjects, who have no better title to them in other respects: yet a person who should consult the interest of the Dissenters only, as a body of men who separate themselves from a principle of *religion*, without regard to the interest of the community at large, might, perhaps, hesitate about taking any steps to procure an enlargement of their privileges.

Professing a religion which inculcates upon us that we are *not of this world*, but only in a course of discipline, to train us up for a better, it is worth considering, whether a  
M situation,

situation, in which more scope would be given to ambition, and other passions, the tendency of which is to attach us to this world, is to be wished for by us. Should not a Christian, as such (though he should by no means secrete himself from society, or decline any opportunity of serving his friend, or his country, when divine Providence seems to call him out to the sphere of active life) be content to pass unmolested in the private walks of life, rejoicing, as his master did, in doing all kind offices to his fellow-creatures, without aspiring at civil power, and those honorary distinctions, with which the hearts of the men of this world are so much captivated, and, very often, so fatally ensnared.

As our Lord warned his disciples, that *the world would love its own*, and would hate them, because they were not of the world; and that he who would follow him, must *take up his cross* to do it; is it not, *cæteris paribus*, more probable that we are these disciples, when we suffer some degree of persecution, and are rather frowned upon by the powers of this world, than if we had free access to all the emoluments of it? Certainly such a situation is far more favourable to our gaining that superiority of mind to the world, which is required of all Christians, whatever be their station in it. We know that, *if persecution should arise on account of the word*, we must be ready to forsake houses, lands, relations, and all the endearments of life, rather than make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience; and that, in those trying times, if we deny Christ, he will also deny us. Then he that would save his life shall lose it, and he only that is willing to lose his life, shall save it to life eternal. This, Christians, is the tenure on which we hold all the blessings of the gospel.

Now, if this be the temper to which we are to be formed, whether persecution should actually arise, or not, what kind



kind of a situation should we (from the knowledge we have of human nature) prescribe, as the most favourable for the purpose? Certainly, not one in which we should have nothing to bear or to suffer, and where every thing should be just as we could wish it. A mind accustomed to this treatment would be ill prepared for encountering the various hardships of the Christian warfare, in a time of persecution. In a situation in every respect favourable to the pursuits and enjoyments of this life, it would not be easy for a man to attain to any thing like a satisfactory conviction, that he had the proper temper and disposition of a Christian. Habits of mind are not acquired by *putting cases* (which, however, persons would little think of doing, when the cases were not likely to occur) but by actual experience and feeling. A habit of caution can never be given to a child by admonition only. It is by frequent hurts that he learns to take care of himself. So likewise courage and fortitude are acquired by being frequently exposed to pains and hardships, by exerting our powers, and feeling the benefit of such exertion.

All these things duly considered, a man who entertains the truly enlarged sentiments of Christianity, and is sensible how momentary and insignificant are all the things of this world, in comparison with those of a future, will, in proportion to the influence of these views, be less impatient of the difficulties and restraints he may lie under in a civil capacity. He will more easily acquiesce in a situation not perfectly eligible, when he is prepared even to bear the greatest sufferings that can befall him in this life with Christian fortitude, patience, and resignation; at the same time that the benevolence of his heart is always ready to take the form of the most generous patriotism, whenever there occurs a clear and great cause to exert it. If a true

Christian be conscious that he is engaged in a good cause, he, of all men, has the least reason to fear *what man can do unto him*, and therefore he is more to be depended upon, in any critical emergence, than any other person whatever.

A Dissenter, then, who is so *upon principle*, who has, consequently, the justest notions of the nature and importance of civil and religious liberty; who is, on many accounts, thoroughly sensible of the blessings of a mild and equal government, and, therefore, heartily attached to the interest of that constitution which allows him the rights which he values so highly; whose mind is prepared to bear *irremediable* hardships with patience, but whose active courage, in cases in which the great interests of his country call him to exert himself, may be depended upon, is a very valuable member of civil society. Such a man will scorn the mean arts of court intrigue. If he can gain his laudable ends, and be admitted to his natural rights, as a loyal British subject, by fair and open means, he will not despise it; but he will rather continue to suffer unjustly, than prostitute his interest to a corrupt, profligate, and oppressive administration.

---

No. V.

*Copy of the Forged Letter found at my House,  
16th July, 1791.*

DEAR DOCTOR,

I AM now provided with every thing necessary, and will be ready at the time appointed to assist in endeavouring to attain that long looked for by us, and root out the constitutional men who have wielded the shield against our rights as free-men, and trust you will also exert yourself,

self, and get all our friends to be ready at the same time, to make the grand push. In expectation of that and success,

I am, dear Doctor,

Your true friend,

London,  
May 2, 1791.

WILLIAM RUSSELL.

### No. VI.

*Mr. Abel Humphrys's Advertisement relating to the  
Calumny of Mr. William Gem.*

#### TO THE PUBLIC.

MR. WILLIAM GEM, resident with his father in New Street, in this town, having had the effrontery to assert some time ago in public company, at the Dog Inn, in Spiceal Street, that—"meeting at Lady Well Baths the young Messrs. Humphryses, one of them had, in his presence, expressed a wish to wade up to his chin in churchmen's blood, and that he, irritated at such an expression, instantly knocked him into the water," together with other particulars, equally unfounded, but tending to give an air of plausibility to his tale, they find it necessary thus publicly to expose his character, that they may defend their own.

Upon the earliest intimation of the existence of the report, having traced it through its various channels, and found Mr. Gem its sole author, one of them waited upon that gentleman, and demanded an explanation. He without hesitation confessed himself the fabricator of the calumny, begged pardon, and pleaded intoxication. This at that time they deemed sufficient; but on perceiving the prevalence of the report, that it had even become the topic of conversation in alehouses, and in manufactories, they



found it necessary again to wait upon that gentleman, in company with a very respectable attorney, and to require that his apology should be public. This reasonable request, though he again acknowledged the criminality of his conduct, he refused to comply with, and it is this refusal which now constrains them to proclaim him to the world an unprincipled calumniator.

So cruel and unmerited an attack upon the characters of young men would, at all times, be infamous; but when made upon the characters of those with whom he was totally unacquainted, in whose company he had never been, and the sons of a man already the victim of popular delusion, its infamy is extreme.

Inhuman must be the heart that could conceive the idea; but what language can define the man that could premeditatedly ascribe it to the innocent?

At another time they had perhaps trusted to their known characters to repel the charge; but in the present season of alarm, when party spirit eagerly nurtures every wicked defamation, in justice to themselves, and to the body to which they belong, they are bound to expose the defamer who can thus wantonly worry their innocent reputation.

For self and brothers,

Birmingham,  
June 19, 1792.

ABEL HUMPHRYS.

## No. VII.

*Copy of a Letter intended to be addressed to the Clergy  
of the Town of Birmingham.*

GENTLEMEN,

I WOULD address you by the title of *my brethren in the Christian ministry*, if I did not think it might offend you, and the object of this address is not irritation,  
but

but peace. As you, and the most zealous friends of the established church, now see the fatal consequences of harsh language, and harsh measures with us, I am willing to think you will have no objection to trying a different conduct. The dreadful effects of *violence* should teach you *moderation*, and urge you to express this moderation in the clearest and least equivocal manner. Then a lasting peace may be established, and from this your cause will be a greater gainer than ours.

In the last eleven years, in which you have shewn a disposition peculiarly hostile to the Dissenters, they have increased in an unprecedented proportion. Not less than ten new congregations of Dissenters, or Methodists, have been formed in that time. Two places of worship are at this time building, and another is intended. We are only looking out for a proper situation. In the mean time, though your places of worship are but five, those who attend public worship in them are little, if at all, increased.

But let hostilities cease, though we are gainers by them. It is for your advantage that they should; and as a sure pledge of reconciliation, good will, and friendship, generously allow us the use of your churches, till our meeting-houses can be rebuilt. We contribute to the support and repairs of them as much as yourselves, and this is but a small advantage in return. It has been long ago dearly purchased by us. We shall not interfere with your hours of worship. We shall not profane or defile them. We will preach in *them the gospel of peace*, and we will bless and pray for you in them. If any thing can ensure the continuance of your church, it will be such lenient measures as these.

The thing that I propose is far from being new in the Christian world. There are churches in several parts of Germany alternately occupied by Catholics and Protestants, ever since the Reformation, and no inconvenience what-

ever, but much good, has arisen from it. When one of your churches was rebuilding, the Dissenters of the place lately offered the members of the establishment the use of their meeting-house, and the various denominations of Dissenters, who differ from one another in sentiment as much as they do from you, make no difficulty of accommodating one another on such occasions. The use of the new meeting-house, now in ruins, was given to the Independents when, on a particular occasion, they wanted a place larger than their own; and whenever it shall be rebuilt, I will answer for its being at your service, or that of any other denomination of Christians whatever.

Believe me, that this or some other measure, that shall shew the decrease of bigotry, is absolutely necessary for the peace of the town, and the good of the country. It is necessary on the part of the clergy in general, and of the court too. By the manner in which our late applications for the repeal of the test laws were rejected, more than the rejection itself, the country at large has taken up the idea, that the Dissenters, and especially the Presbyterians, and Unitarian Dissenters, are odious to government, and that all connexion with them is to be shunned by the friends of the church and of the king; an idea which may have the most fatal consequences.

What must be the feelings of a set of men, conscious of no crime, but who consider themselves as the best citizens, and when industry, peaceable behaviour, and loyalty, have been approved at all times, but especially since the abdication of their enemies the Stuarts, and who were always deemed the best friends of the family on the throne, finding themselves now regarded in a different light, and as it were *proscribed* by the government under which they live? And what must be the sentiments of others towards persons in this situation? It is like setting a price upon our heads, and  
 inviting



inviting the mob to insult us, as of late they have done in almost all parts of England.

It is highly necessary, therefore, for the peace of the country, (which, as its burdens and difficulties increase, requires the united strength of the whole, to enable it to bear them) that the bishops, and the court itself, should take some measures to convince the public that they consider us as worthy not only of protection, but of confidence. The late riots will give them a good opportunity of doing something that shall have this tendency, and their concurrence in the repeal of all penal laws in matters of religion would not hurt, but greatly strengthen, the establishment, and abate the animosity of all sects; who would, with infinitely less reluctance, contribute to the support of a religious system which left them access to all civil privileges, and did not set a mark upon them, as people *not trust worthy*.

By all means, let the present opportunity, in some way or other, be improved in favour of future peace and harmony. Such another will never, I hope, be given us. Otherwise, no man can tell what may be the effect of the animosity which through all England will be increased by it. Our discussion of particular doctrines may go on as before. Inquiries into religious truth have no tendency to break the peace of society, even though writers should not always conduct themselves as becomes scholars and gentlemen. Do you, the clergy of the established church, do your part in this *work of peace, and labour of love*, and our governors will be more ready to do theirs. For it can only be to oblige the church, that the Dissenters have been frowned upon as they have been. Let us, mutually weeping over the dismal scene that is now before us, embrace as brothers, whose eyes are opened, and who will not again suffer them to be blinded by our common enemy, *party spirit*,

*spirit.* I call this a common enemy, because it is hostile to our common Christianity, and is too apt to affect us all.

My own principles and conduct, though they are conspicuous enough in my writings, have been industriously misrepresented. But without looking back to the past, let us mutually sign an *act of oblivion*, and hope for better times in future. I love my country, notwithstanding all the defects in its constitution, which I therefore earnestly wish may be removed. And such reforms as are easily practicable, and by which all parties would be gainers, would for ever remove the necessity, and with that the present dread, of any great *revolution*. While this country is tenable for me, I shall think myself happy to stay in it. When it is untenable, I thank God that others, and those not undesirable ones, are ready to receive me, and especially I trust a country more distant, but infinitely preferable to them all. Hoping to meet you there, notwithstanding we may now and then *fall out by the way*, I am, from my heart,

Gentlemen,

Your well wisher, and

A friend of peace,

J. PRIESTLEY.

London,  
July 20, 1791.

### No. VIII.

*Extract from a Letter inserted in the Shrewsbury Chronicle, Sept. 14, 1791.*

For the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*.

MR. PRINTER,

SINCE Dr. Priestley continues to breath out his threatenings against the establishment of this country, and to diffuse his prognostications of the speedy downfall of what

what he has blasphemously called, "The idolatrous Worship of Jesus Christ;" and since long experience evinces that arguments the most demonstrative, drawn from the only source whence man can derive any knowledge of Divine things, are all thrown away upon him: I submit it to the consideration of those whose immediate duty it is to watch over the Christian religion, as part of the fundamental law of this realm, Whether it be not incumbent on them to put the statutes in force against him as a Blasphemer of God, and a disturber of the peace? Had this been done a few years ago, it is plain from the declarations of the rioters lately executed at Warwick, that the depredations, which they so outrageously, unlawfully, and wickedly committed, had never taken place. Can any time be better for the Attorney General to take such a notorious delinquent in hand, than the present; when it is evident that a *legal* prosecution for his repeated blasphemies against God, and threats against the establishment, would be grateful to an undoubted majority of all ranks of people, notwithstanding his vain boasts to the contrary?

"Sedition, which used formerly to hide its trains of mischief in caverns, under ground, now brandishes its torch in broad day-light: and the policy of the age (too deep for *me* to understand) leaves it to itself, and waits to see what it will do; and when the streets are in flames, tries to put out the fire as well as it can; and disperses a lawless multitude with blood and slaughter; which might have been restrained and saved by a timely execution of the laws."—*Jones's Sermon, at Bury St. Edmunds, May 31, 1791, p. 10, 11.*

There is scarce one publication of Dr. Priestley's, either on a *theological* or *political* subject, that will not furnish copious matter whereon to ground an information; or indictment.

Sept. 14, 1791.

ΟΥΔΕΙΣ ΔΕΤΤΕΡΟΣ,



## No. IX.

*An Epitaph written for me by some Person in the West  
of England.*

Near this Place lies the BODY of  
JOSEPH FUNGUS, LL. D. F. R. S.

And, strange as it may appear,

This FLAMING INCENDIARY,

Owing to the Clemency of a mild Government,

DIED A NATURAL DEATH.

In him *Sedition* hath lost its most zealous and indefatigable Friend; the *World*, an imperious and turbulent Member of Society; and the *Dissenters from the Established Church*, a furious and indiscreet Advocate, who did irreparable Injury to their common Cause. He was a professed Enemy of every System of Government, and an avowed Friend to Anarchy and Confusion. Led by extreme Vanity, and the Imbecility of abstract Reasoning, to think he was capable of raising a Storm violent enough to tear up the Establishment of his Country by the Roots; he wanted Penetration to discover that the same Hurricane, by taking a contrary Direction, might sweep away his own "baseless Fabrick, and leave not a Wreck behind." His Publications were numerous, among which, his Treatises on Natural and Experimental Philosophy discover considerable Abilities and great Application; but his religious, or rather irreligious Tracts, abound with such Arrogance, Egotisms, and unpardonable Indecencies, that Charity will not suffer the candid Part of Mankind to suppose that any Christian Society will ever sanction them,

them. He was altogether a man of such an *ambitious* and *restless* Disposition, that *Heaven* and *Earth*, beholding his Presumption in endeavouring to unite in his own Person the Characters of *Lucifer* and *Cromwell*, disclaimed him; which coming to the ears of *his black Friends* on the other Side of the *Stygian Lake*, they unanimously elected him HIGH PRIEST in the Temple of their GREAT MASTER.

THIS MONUMENT was ERECTED By a considerable Number of *principled* and dispassionate DISSENTERS, who, preferring the peaceable Enjoyment of *real Property*, to the infamous Idea of *living on Plunder*, or the *chimerical one of equalizing all Ranks and Orders of Men*, thought it *their Duty* to publish and perpetuate their entire Disapprobation of

GUNPOWDER JOE's Political Conduct,

And their utter Abhorrence of his

UNCHRISTIAN DOCTRINES.

---

No. X.

*A Letter addressed to the People of England in the Public Advertiser for Saturday, Aug. 18, 1792.*

*Quos JUPITER vult perdere, prius dementat.*

WHOLE nations may become insane, planet-struck, as well as individuals. God Almighty often delivers up whole nations, as well as individuals, to the depravity

vity and flagitiousness of their own vitiated feelings, the greatest calamity that can possibly befall them. Had the French exhibited on the stage of the world no other proof of their having lost their senses, and of their being under the immediate flagellation of Heaven, (*'tis God, not man alone, that precipitates the torrent of disasters over France at the present tremendous moment*); had they given no other proof of their insanity but the late public deification of that abandoned systematical professional infidel, Voltaire, and their more recent panegyric on Dr. Priestley, of prophane and blasphemous memory, the stupendous magnitude of this folly would have demonstrated and justified the propriety of taking out the statute against the whole body of the nation. Whoever made a panegyric on Judas, but Lucifer the father of darkness? What Roman ever praised Catiline, but his colleagues Lentulus and Cethegus? Who ever called the two incendiaries, Tyler and Straw, honest patriots, but Thomas Paine? Who ever thought John the painter a worthy candidate for fame, but an English Jacobine? Doubtless there is such a thing as decency, as propriety, as consistency of conduct: was it decent, was it acting like rational beings, to hold up two such callous dogmatical profligates in opinion, as Voltaire and Priestley, as examples of excellence, as models of wisdom, as patterns to be followed? Why call the one Socrates, and the other Fenelon? Was not this most egregious prostitution of language, most flagrant abuse of words? Socrates and Fenelon were the shining ornaments, the bright luminaries of the age they lived in; they were public blessings; they were the great apostles of virtue, delegated by heaven to instruct and meliorate the world with the salubrious doctrines of truth. They preached nothing but goodness, and universal philanthropy; and were themselves illustrious examples of the important lessons they taught. But what doctrines do



do our modern philosophers preach? Why, they very gravely tell us, and with a confidence as if they really believed it, that revelation is nothing but a solemn imposture, that the gospel is a fable of the first magnitude, the Saviour a fantastic idol, a phantom of imagination; they maintain and prove it as clear as any proposition in Euclid, (if you will believe them) that the *soul is mortal*, that the golden promises of religion are idle dreams, fantastick delusions, to catch weak unenlightened minds.

These sanguine and laborious emissaries of darkness preach the black creed of infidelity with as much zeal, and assiduity, as the apostles preached the creed of salvation. The apostles were not more ardent to propagate and disseminate the great truths of Christianity, than these men are strenuous and indefatigable in their endeavours to abolish them. But with this signal difference, reader, God evidently co-operated with the apostles in the first promulgation of the gospel, and demonstrated their divine mission by signs, wonders, and splendid miracles; but who co-operates with Voltaire and Priestley in their indefatigable efforts to abolish the gospel? Beyond a doubt the great enemy of mankind, the father of sin, is with them tooth and nail. They have likewise most strenuously combating in their cause the whole tribe of ancient and modern unbelievers, the great mass of atheists, freethinkers, and libertines, existing in the world, the vast herd of recently corrupted and adulterated Socinians; add to these the whole crew of modern philosophers and metaphysicians, (the tarantulated Humes and Rousseaus of the day); all these militate against revelation, litigate the great truths of Christianity, with as much rancour and acrimony as Voltaire and Priestley. They have, moreover, most strenuously combating in their cause vain presumption, impudent assertions, dogmatical opinion, licentious assumption, un-

8 blushing

blushing misquotation, wilful misrepresentations of authors; all these co-operate with Voltaire and Priestley in propagating the black creed of infidelity. Will you praise these men then? Did they make a proper use of the talents God had so pre-eminently gifted them with? No, they prostituted their abilities to the most depraved and most flagitious purposes. They pointed, emulously pointed the great gun of their intellect, the whole artillery, the whole battery of their faculties *against the very God who gave it them*. They stretched every nerve of their souls to degrade and extirpate the great fundamental truths of religion; they laboured morning, noon, and night, most anxiously to persuade the world to *cease to be Christian*, and once more to *become Pagan*, to relinquish revelation, and once more adopt the religion of nature. This *par nobile fratrum*, this *indefatigable yoke* of infidels have practised every logical knavery, manœuvred every subtle literary fraud. They have exhausted the whole proteuism (if we may so speak) of chicane and finesse, in endeavouring to explode and abolish the soothing doctrine of redemption, the grand panacea of the gospel, the only infallible antidote against the common unavoidable ills of life, the *noblest cordial* in the gift of heaven. This golden nostrum, my countrymen, revealed to you by our Saviour, these lettered bravos, these fierce insulting Goliaths of argument, these wilful murderers of the repose of the world, want to rob you of. In order to accomplish their infernal purpose, they put the gospel upon the bed of Procrustes; if the text is too *short*, they *lengthen* it, if too *long*, they curtail it; if neither will answer the point, they boldly *amputate*, totally *annihilate*, and swear it is spurious. Are *these men* then  *blessings* to the world? Are they of benefit to mankind? No! they are curses of the first magnitude; they are great national calamities, calamities more dreadful than nature's worst calamities,

mities, far worse than plague or earthquake; these only kill the body, the perishable part of man, but the doctrines of those men infallibly kill the soul, the immortal part of man, that is, they poison it, and prepare it for everlasting perdition. Drink one drop of the Lethe of their creed, and you are lost for ever. You are transmuted—you are changed—you instantly forget your God—you forget you are a man—you *materialise* the God, and you *brutalise* the man—you are lost to every honest glow of the heart, dead to every generous manly sensation; in short, you are as *literally a beast* as if *really touched* with the wand *Circæan*. To lump, accumulate, and concentrate every curse in one, you are a Painist in your political, and a Priestleyan in your religious creed. Could heaven, in the plenitude of its ire, inflict a heavier punishment on you?

You, my countrymen, have avoided the rock the French have so miserably split on; you are so far from consecrating and embalming books of blasphemy and treason, as the French have done, that you have most signally, and most pointedly, expressed your abhorrence and detestation of both, in reprobating in the most public manner the works of the Paines and Priestleys of the age.—You have demonstrated to all Europe, with a blaze of loyalty almost unexampled in the annals of history, your love and attachment to your king and country. You have stood boldly forward in the face of the day, the strenuous champions of the noblest cause that ever warmed and animated the heart of man. You have demonstrated to all the world, in the most splendid manner, with an effusion of honest zeal that will do honour to your feelings to the latest posterity, that *you will no longer suffer your constitution to be defamed, your religion to be blasphemed, nor your king to be calumniated* by a gang of impostors, who impudently presume to call

N

themselves



themselves Englishmen. Can that man be an Englishman who labours incessantly to destroy the civil and ecclesiastical establishment of the country? It is true, you have shewn most noble, most manly resentment, against the turbulent incendiaries of the times. But remember, my countrymen, Paine and Priestley still live; their works are not yet buried:—one rotten sheep, they say, will pollute a whole flock; a little leaven will agitate and ferment a large mass; two turbulent haranguing soldiers have been known to make a whole army mutiny. Beware of these men, my countrymen! One of them, in spite of the penal statute, will sell you blasphemy enough for two-pence to contaminate and blast a whole county, and the other treason enough for sixpence to convulse and dismember a whole kingdom. What then is to be done with these callous, hardened delinquents? What further marks of public detestation would you wish to fix on them? The grand jury of Middlesex (as was observed in the letter preceding this) presented the posthumous works of Bolingbroke as public nuisances. Why not then, my countrymen, present the works of Paine and Priestley as public nuisances? Are they not nuisances of the first magnitude, of the most dangerous tendency? Contain they not doctrines declaredly inimical to church and state? declaredly subversive of both? Present them, then, at the next grand inquest of the nation, at every county assize in the kingdom, and insist on their being burnt by the hands of the common hangman, in token of your abhorrence—boldly declaring to the world, as hath been observed before,—that *you will no longer suffer your constitution to be blackened and reviled, your God to be blasphemed, nor your King to be calumniated with impunity.*

Cirencester.

CAUSIDICUS.

It

It is reported in Eusebius, “ that the apostle St. John going  
 “ one day into a public bath, saw Cerinthus there, one  
 “ of the first opposers of the Divinity of the Saviour,  
 “ and depravers of the gospel. The apostle instantly  
 “ retreated at the sight of so abandoned an infidel, with  
 “ the strongest marks of abhorrence and indignation in  
 “ his countenance.” Dr. Johnson being on a visit to  
 Pembroke College, Priestley’s arrival was announced;  
 the moment Johnson saw him enter, he retired with the  
 greatest precipitation, impressed, no doubt, with the same  
 ideas as the apostle at the sight of Cerinthus. On the  
 above anecdotes the following lines are built.

JOHN saw Cerinthus in the bath; he saw  
 The monster, and lo! instant did withdraw,  
 Dreading lest heaven should sudden vengeance send,  
 To crush the wretch who durst the Christ offend;  
 To crush the wretch who durst the *Christ deny*,  
 And God the *Father* in the *Son* defy.  
 Johnson *saw* Priestley, *saw*, and big with ire,  
 Behold! the good old man with speed retire;  
 Fearing, no doubt, some sad tremendous doom,  
 With such a rank blasphemer in the room.  
 Th’ apostle and the sage both felt the same;  
 What honest Christian can their conduct blame?

CAUSIDICUS.

## No. XI.

*Copy of an Advertisement in the Birmingham Newspaper, relating to the Address to me from the Philosophical Society at Derby.*

## ADVERTISEMENT.

Derby, Oct. 3, 1791.

AN address to Dr. Priestley having been inserted in Mr. Pearson's paper, as agreed upon at a meeting of the Philosophical Society in Derby, Sept. 3, 1791; it is thought expedient by some of the members, who were not privy to the address, who cannot approve of it, and who think it improper a few individuals should publish their own sentiments as those of the society at large, to inform the public, that the same was agreed to, and fabricated by only five members of the society out of thirty-seven; and that in consequence thereof, at the General Annual Meeting, on Saturday, October first, the following resolution was agreed to: That in future no act of publicity shall be carried into effect, except at an annual meeting, or at a monthly one, a fortnight's previous notice being given of the business to every member of the society.

## No. XII.

*An Answer to the preceding by the Society.*

SIR,

AN advertisement, misrepresenting a transaction of the Philosophical Society at Derby, having been inserted in a late newspaper, it is judged proper to refute it by a statement of the following circumstances.

I. That



I. That all business of the society, viz. the electing members, ordering in books, and enacting new laws and regulations, has been constantly, since the first institution of the society, transacted at the monthly meetings.

II. That of thirty-seven members, thirteen only are resident in the town, and that the address to Dr. Priestley was voted unanimously at a regular monthly meeting, at which was present the usual number of attending members, and that as it contained no reference to the doctor's *political opinions*, and even recommended to him to decline those theological controversies which seem to have provoked the vengeance of his adversaries, it was conceived that no man of a liberal mind would object to the congratulating him on his escape from the violence of an enraged mob; and that there could be no member of a *philosophical* society who did not regret the demolition of his valuable laboratory and manuscripts; and on that presumption they judged it unnecessary to delay till another month, a measure which, from the relation in which Dr. Priestley stands to all philosophical societies, seemed peculiarly and immediately proper on the present occasion.

III. That at the half-yearly meeting on the first of October, Mr. Hope was the only person who expressed a disapprobation of the address, declaring that his reason for doing it was his differing from Dr. Priestley in political sentiments, adding, that no man could respect the doctor's religious and philosophical opinions more highly than himself.

IV. That, when the late proposition was made for giving a fortnight's notice previous to all public transactions of the society, so far from its being understood to be a censure on the address, (as is very disingenuously insinuated in the advertisement referred to) the gentleman who moved the proposition, prefaced it by declaring that he intended

nothing less than a disapprobation of the measure; for so desirous was he of expressing his respect to Dr. Priestley as a philosopher, and his abhorrence of all persecution as a man, that he felt a singular mortification at having been precluded from signing the address, by not having received previous information of such a circumstance being intended; and that on that account alone he was induced to propose a regulation for similar occasions which might occur in future.

The members of the philosophical society, resident in and near Derby, having been summoned to an extraordinary meeting, *expressly* to take into consideration the advertisement in the Derby newspaper, of which the Rev. Mr. Hope avowed himself to be the author,

*It was resolved unanimously, by ballot,*

That the Rev. Mr. Hope having, in defiance of the resolution made at the last general meeting, committed an act of publicity, by printing in the Derby newspaper the resolution of the society without its knowledge or consent, and having in his advertisement insidiously misrepresented an act of the society, and Mr. Hope having been this day fully heard upon the subject, and not having explained his conduct to the satisfaction of the meeting, It is the opinion of this meeting, that he be desired to withdraw his name from the list of the society.

Derby,  
Oct. 10, 1791.

R. ROE, Secretary.

## No. XIII.

*A Description of an Allegorical Medal published at  
Birmingham since the Riot.*

This Day is published,

DEDICATED TO ALL REVOLUTIONISTS IN THE BRITISH  
DOMINIONS,

AN ALLEGORICAL MEDAL!

1791-2.

O B V E R S E.

THE demon or evil genius of the 14th of July, is displaying her democratic standard; the flag contains a king's crown, surrounded with drops of blood, alluding to the regicide of the last century. On the top is a cap of liberty, the mistaken idea of which is the source of all her enormities. The young fiends she cherishes proves her prolific wickedness, which illustrates this motto:

"OUR FOOD IS SEDITION."

.....

R E V E R S E.

A Viper in the grass;—this character cannot be better illustrated than where history proves that his subtilty brought misery on all mankind. He here partakes of the blessings of heaven and earth, at the same time, in secret covert, is premeditating destruction against the very cause of his comfort. The motto,

"NOURISHED TO TORMENT,"

shews the restless ingratitude of a corrupt and disloyal heart.



## No. XIV.

*An Account of the Clergy of Birmingham refusing to walk in funeral Processions with Dissenting Members since the Riot.*

IN this present month of October 1792, the Rev. Mr. Scholefield was requested by the surviving relatives of one of his hearers (of the name of Thomson) to attend at the funeral, to which he readily assented, but enquired at which of the churches the corpse was to be interred, and whether the clergyman had been apprized of the intention of the family respecting the invitation given to himself. These questions were put to the daughter of the deceased, and before she had replied to them, the son came in, who had just then been to the Rev. Mr. Young, lecturer of St. Paul's Chapel, (where it was intended to inter the corpse) and his report was, that when he gave Mr. Young an invitation to attend the funeral from the house of the deceased, he very readily assented; but, upon being told that Mr. Scholefield was expected there, and that it was hoped he would have no objection to going in the same coach with him, he said, at first, that he did not know, but after a very short pause, added, "the clergy of the town had come in general to a resolution not to ride or walk with any Dissenting Minister at a funeral."

This declaration from Mr. Young is the more remarkable, as he has rode in the same coach with Mr. Scholefield upon a former similar occasion.

## No. XV.

*Extract of a Letter written to me by a Person who was in my Library during the Demolition of the House, in Answer to one in which I had requested his Evidence concerning it.*

Birmingham, March 5, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

I DEEM it right thus immediately to inform you, that I did not arrive at your house till after the destruction of the library. The road for half a mile of my approach was strewn with your books, the mob were carrying others away, and there was not above twelve octavos on the shelves when I entered the room, the floor of which was totally covered, two or three inches deep, with torn leaves, chiefly manuscript. The books that I saw collected at the top of the field behind the house with part of the furniture, were those, I presume, which were the only ones saved.

---

## No. XVI.

*An Address of the Dissenters and Delegates of the Dissenters in England, to the Sufferers in the Riot at Birmingham.*

To the Protestant Dissenters of the Town and Neighbourhood of Birmingham, who suffered from the Riots which happened in the month of July last.

WE, the assembled deputies and delegates of the Protestant Dissenters of England, in the name of the numerous and respectable body of our constituents, feel it incumbent

incumbent on us thus publicly to testify our astonishment and horror at the outrages which you have experienced from an ignorant and misguided multitude, and our respect for that manly fortitude with which you have supported these unmerited sufferings.

While however, as sustaining one common character, we are anxious to pay this sincere tribute of affectionate and fraternal sympathy to all our injured brethren, we are persuaded that we shall gratify alike your feelings and our own, when, waving our various speculative and especially our theological differences, we desire to express our peculiar concern on the account of that distinguished individual, whom the rancour of this cruel persecution selected as the first victim of its rage.—Deeply convinced of the importance of truth, we unite in admiring the ardour which he has ever discovered in the pursuit of it; as freemen, we applaud his unremitted exertions in the great cause of civil and religious liberty; as friends to literature, we are proud of our alliance with a name so justly celebrated as that of Dr. Priestley; and we pray the Almighty Disposer of events long to continue to us and to the world, a life which science and virtue have contributed to render illustrious.

We rejoice in the thought, that, though loaded with calumny and overwhelmed by violence, you have not yet been disgraced by one serious imputation of a crime; and it is therefore reasonable to confide in the justice of your country for an ample reparation of the wrongs you have sustained.—But, in proportion to your innocence, the infamy of these proceedings falls with accumulated weight on the authors and the perpetrators of such mischief; nor can we avoid observing in the circumstances of this transaction evident symptoms either of some gross defect in our general system of police, or of the most supine and culpable negligence in those whose immediate duty it was to have protected



tested the places of public worship, as well as the lives and property, of their fellow-citizens; and we trust that the executive government, which exerted so much laudable activity to repress the disorders on the first notice, will proceed more fully to vindicate its own dignity and the national honour, by seriously inquiring how it came to pass that they were permitted to rise unchecked to such a height of destructive fury.

Whatever may be the event, we desire to assure you of our warmest affection, of our steadiest support. Although in this instance the storm has fallen on you alone, we all feel ourselves to have been equally within the aim of the spirit which directed it; nor shall we ever attempt to elude similar violence by meanly abandoning the common cause, or deserting our brethren in the hour of distress.

Our adversaries betray little acquaintance with the character and principles of the men whom they presume to insult and vilify, if they imagine that the spirit of the Dissenters is to be subdued and broken by the means which have been employed at Birmingham. Such measures can only tend to cement more closely our bond of union, and to invigorate our efforts to procure the repeal of those invidious and injurious laws, by which we are held forth as the proper objects of suspicion and insult to the unthinking vulgar.

Persuaded that we have never merited those absurd and malicious imputations by which ignorance and bigotry have always attempted to excuse illegal violence, we boldly appeal for our justification to our general conduct, whenever on great national emergencies we have been drawn forth to action. We cannot point out any other criterion of our principles as a body, than the uniform tenor of our public conduct. We know that on such occasions we shall be found ever to have shewn the most affectionate and inviolable

riable attachment to the constitution of this kingdom, as settled on the principles of the glorious revolution, on which alone depends the title of the present august family to the British throne; and on this fair and open ground we challenge any class of our enemies to a comparison.

But although we have no wish to conceal our sentiments, yet maintaining, as we shall never cease to do, the equal right of every citizen to all the common benefits of society, we apprehend that to call on us to purchase protection, safety, or even the good opinion of our fellow-subjects, by any avowal which the law does not require of all, or by any silence which it does not universally enjoin; is an assumption of superiority, which liberal minds will disclaim, and to which, conscious of no inferiority but in numbers, of no guilt but the love of liberty and of our country, we see not the smallest reason to submit.

We trust that our countrymen will at length discover that it is not our fault if some degree of discontent be ever the effect of oppression. We shall not relinquish the attempt to convince them, that civil distinctions founded on religious differences, are the real source of the disturbances which have so frequently arisen among contending sects in the same community; and we flatter ourselves that Britain, which formerly took the lead in religious toleration, will not be the last nation in the world to acknowledge the just claims of religious liberty; but that the day will arrive much sooner than those imagine, who reflect not on the present aspect and tendencies of human affairs, when the good sense of our country will admit us to that equal rank for which we contend, and when all shall cordially concur to efface the stain which the late outrages have fixed on our national character.

Signed by the unanimous order of the meeting,  
 King's Head, Poultry, EDW. JEFFRIES, Chairman.  
 London, February 1, 1792.

## No. XVII.

*The Answer by the Sufferers.*

To the Deputies and Delegates of the Protestant Dissenters  
of England, assembled in London.

Birmingham, April 22, 1792.

GENTLEMEN,

WE the sufferers by the late riots in the town and neighbourhood of Birmingham, were highly gratified by the reception of your affectionate address, and though local circumstances and considerations have retarded our acknowledgment of it, we have not been the less sensible of its value, or unmindful of the return it so forcibly demands from us. Though we were never so sensible of the value of our common faith as at this trying period, though its invigorating principles were not before this æra either justly known, or fully experienced; though we have derived continual support, as well as unspeakable satisfaction and comfort from them, yet we confess they receive fresh energy from the friendly sympathy, and the truly Christian spirit, which you have manifested upon this trying occasion.

We rejoice that, notwithstanding all the opprobrium our malicious adversaries are endeavouring to cast upon us, you have the firmness and generosity to step forth and acknowledge us as brethren. We rejoice that at the very instant in which our common principles are made the subject of general censure and ridicule, your truly respectable body has given public testimony to their efficacy, and generously acted upon them, by thus holding out to us the right hand of fellowship. Persecuted, and injured as we have been, and still are, an address of sympathy and condolence from so  
respectable



respectable a body as the assembled deputies and delegates of the Protestant Dissenters of England, sent in the name of your numerous constituents, gives us a satisfaction we cannot describe, and affords a prospect which reanimates our spirits and revives our best hopes. Fully persuaded of the truth of our principles, of the justice of our cause, and conscious of none but benevolent views in our public efforts, we are determined to persevere in support of those great truths which have been too long concealed from the world.

The honourable mention you make of that noble individual who has done so much to enlighten the minds of his countrymen, as well as to extend science, was by no means the least pleasing part of your address. Nothing but the personal safety and happiness of him, at whose praise even the tongue of scandal is forced to be silent, could have in any degree reconciled us to his loss. We esteem him as the friend of the whole human race, and as an honour to his country; but the world knows not his value; his country is insensible of his worth. The full effect of his strenuous exertions in his pastoral duty alone cannot at present be computed. It will be more and more felt, and acknowledged. In the space of eleven years he has erected a monument more substantially founded than the pyramids of the East, and inscribed it with characters which shall survive the wreck of nature; we mean in the minds of youth enlightened and improved by his instructions.

There is a time coming, and we trust it is at no great distance, when the foolish and ignorant persons who perpetrated those dismal acts which you lament, and which we cannot think upon without horror, will be sensible of their folly. Posterity will stamp an anathema on them. The broad blot of this infamy must also remain to tarnish the annals of our country. History must relate, that

at

at the close of the eighteenth century the most virtuous and useful members of the community of Great Britain, were oppressed and persecuted without sympathy from the multitude, and that a most distinguished individual met with opprobrium and insolence from a country which he had endeavoured through life to serve in every way that benevolence, science, and uprightness, could point out. To have our names transmitted to posterity with his, as those who have incurred reproach for their firm adherence to the principles of civil and religious liberty, is an honour which we did not anticipate, but of which we would not be deprived.

Be assured, Gentlemen, that we shall cheerfully concur with you in your endeavours to obtain the repeal of all penal statutes in matters of religion, hoping that unanimity in the grand principles of liberty and truth will unite the common body of Dissenters, and that they will persevere in their endeavours till those intolerant and unchristian statutes, which have so long been a disgrace to our code, shall be expunged from it.

We remain,

Gentlemen, &c.

Signed in the name, and with the unanimous concurrence  
of a general meeting of sufferers,

WILLIAM RUSSELL.

## No. XVIII.

*An Account of the Alarm and Loss of Mr. Carpenter of Woodrow, in a Letter from his Brother.*

W. RUSSELL, ESQ. DIGBETH, BIRMINGHAM.

Woodrow, near Bromsgrove, May 9, 1792.

SIR,

THE first intelligence we had of the riots in Birmingham, was on the 15th of July, but being extremely busy in haymaking, we paid but little attention to it, thinking the civil power would soon restore every thing to peace and order again. However, on the following evening several of our neighbours who had been at Bromsgrove, came to inform us that the Woodrow was in the list of proscribed houses, and that my eldest brother's life was threatened. This alarmed us; but my brother, not choosing to trust to these reports, went to Bromsgrove to gain more authentic information. He returned about eleven o'clock, and informed us that the reports seemed but too true, that many of the lower class of people in Bromsgrove seemed very much disposed to rioting, some of them calling after him as he rode along the street, saying, that the meeting-houses should come down the next day, and cursing the Presbyterians with the utmost bitterness.

At twelve o'clock we were surprised by a post-chaise driving to the door; it contained Mr. and Mrs. Benton, the nurse maid, and several children: they came to beg a night's lodging, as they durst not stop any longer so near Birmingham, either in their own house or with their friends; and so precipitate was their flight, that they were obliged to bring  
the



the children out of bed with only their night clothes on— Poor little innocents! it was a distressing sight to see them, and still more distressing not to be able to afford them a safe asylum: for, on hearing our dangerous situation, Mrs. Benton thought it most prudent to go farther on. Brother Thomas, myself, and a neighbour, then went to the top of the Lickey, from whence we could plainly see a large house in flames towards Birmingham; this proved but a poor consolation, and we returned home with heavy hearts. At six o'clock on Sunday morning we dispatched two messengers, one to Bromsgrove, the other to Birmingham. The latter returned about eleven o'clock with an account that a large party of the rioters were gone to burn Kingswood Meeting, and from thence they would proceed to the Woodrow. My brother also returned from Bromsgrove with similar information. I immediately took our most valuable papers and writings, and buried them in a neighbour's garden. It was also thought most prudent to remove part of our furniture; but where to take them was the question, as our neighbours, though many of them were willing, durst not take them in, for fear of bringing a mob after them, and thereby endangering their property. After a short consultation it was thought most advisable to send it to Kidderminster. We immediately packed up our plate, linen, beds, books, &c. &c. and sent off three waggon loads (including a quantity of wool) in the afternoon. At the same time my mother, sister, and youngest nephew, went to Boar-cote, where they found an asylum at the house of Mr. Cox, who treated them with the utmost kindness. We sat up all night, (indeed we had never a bed left in the house, had any of us been disposed for one) and kept a strong guard both in and around the house.

On Monday morning we had information that the rioters were dispersed in parties around the country, committing

O

various

various depredations; and that the soldiers were too few in number to leave Birmingham in pursuit of them.

Parties of people from Bromsgrove and its vicinity went to join the rioters; and about one or two o'clock a number of people from this neighbourhood collected together upon Round Hill, half a mile from the Woodrow, to be ready in all appearance to join the rioters when they came. In this party were several who had been heard to threaten brother John in the most violent manner. Things wearing such a serious aspect at this time, we thought proper to remove the remainder of our household effects, which we conveyed into the fields, and hid among the corn, or buried in the earth. Brother Thomas and myself also removed our wheat and flour from the mill. A very violent shower happily dispersed the people on Round Hill, and also prevented the Birmingham rioters from coming forwards.

About nine o'clock in the evening a gentleman rode to the Woodrow, and said he had left a body of the rioters on the top of the Lickey marching towards the Woodrow, their number uncertain. Brother John then determined to defend his house, and desired his men to prepare for action; but at length, from the excessive importunity of those about him, he gave it up, and left his house for the first time, with the melancholy prospect of never seeing it again. He had not rode more than a mile before he fell in with fifteen or sixteen rioters with blue cockades in their hats, and armed with bludgeons. On my brother's inquiring where they were going, several of them answered, *to burn Mr. Carpenter's house, according to orders from justice Carles.* My brother perceiving they did not know him, said, Why, I thought Mr. Carpenter was a good sort of a man, why should you wish to burn his house? The answer was, he may be a very good sort of a man for all we know,

know, but *we have justice Carles's orders*, and down it shall come. On being asked for what reason, they said, *for being at the hotel*. My brother then told them they had better go to Bromsgrove, and get something to drink, and some more gentlemen coming up, and giving the same advice, they thought best to follow it.

The next morning (Tuesday), on their return from Bromsgrove, they called at the Woodrow to beg something to drink, and, while brother Thomas went to draw some beer, they attempted to go into the house, but our men prevented them. After pillaging several of the poor people's houses as they went along, they stopped at a public house about two miles from the Woodrow. Brother John returned home about half an hour after the rioters went away; and, as soon as he heard where they were, set off to Birmingham to procure some foldiers, and take them prisoners. In the mean time a Mr. Lane, who said he was a constable from Birmingham (and who, as I am since informed, died through excessive fatigue in the zealous performance of his duty), called at the Woodrow, and, on my informing him where the rioters were, said he would go and take them if I could get some resolute people we could depend upon to go with us. I immediately rode to Bromsgrove, and called several of my friends together, whom I found willing to join us; but as no member of the established church would go with us, it was given up for fear of giving offence. My brother returned from Birmingham in the evening, and gave the following account of his interview with the justices. On his introduction he informed them that a party of the rioters had been at his house that morning, and came, as they informed him, the preceding evening, by the order of justice Carles, to burn his house down; and, as he knew where they were, begged the favour of half a dozen light horse to secure them: but



this request not being granted, my brother offered to take them without the assistance of the military, if it met with their approbation: but their approbation was not given. Mr. Carles asked my brother if he knew ever an honest Presbyterian about the Lickey? My brother said he did not come there to talk about religion, he wished to prove himself a good citizen, and thought he was doing his duty by endeavouring to secure a set of lawless villains who were plundering the innocent inhabitants of the country. My brother was asked if he was at the hotel on the 14th of July?—Yes. What toasts did you drink?—Several; the king, for one. We don't believe it.—It is true. Will you swear it?—Yes. Dr. Spencer then offered him a bible for that purpose: my brother was going to take it, when the Doctor changed his mind, and put the book down.

It is inconceivable the fatigue we underwent, and the anxiety we felt during the riots. On the Monday I was on horseback, reconnoitring, &c. near fifteen hours, and wet to the skin through two great coats, and was at last so overcome with fatigue that I could scarcely sit on my horse. Brother Thomas put on his boots on Sunday morning, and did not pull them off till Wednesday night. My mother and sister were in continual fear lest brother John should lose his life, as it was so repeatedly threatened. We estimate our loss in damage, loss of property, expences, &c. at near 60l.

I am, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

WM. CARPENTER.

P.S. A man whom we sent to gain intelligence on the Sunday, fell in with the rioters at Mr. Wakeman's house near Kingswood: he saw the general, as he was styled,  
pull

pull a paper out of his pocket, which seemed to be a list of houses, and, on looking over it, said, "that house was to come down; but, as Mr. Wakeman had behaved so well, it should stop a little longer, but that they would come back, and pull it down before the next morning."

## No. XIX.

*An Account of the High Church Spirit which has long prevailed at Stourbridge.*

AS the violent High Church spirit which produced the riot at Birmingham has been generally ascribed to me, I have taken some pains to inquire into the state of some of the neighbouring places in that respect; and thinking that from Stourbridge (which it is something remarkable I never was at except in once riding through it) to be as much to my purpose as any, I shall give it, as collected from different persons, whose accounts, I have no doubt, may be depended upon.

The Presbyterian church at Stourbridge was founded by Mr. Foley, an ancestor of the present Lord Foley, the members of which church first assembled in his house for public worship. This house has since been converted to an inn, and the room now called the Old Assembly Room was the room used for that purpose. Mr. Foley's domestic chaplain (a Mr. Flower) was their pastor

for many years. About this time the said Mr. Foley erected a large building for the reception of sixty poor boys, whom he directed should be clothed in a blue uniform, lodged and boarded in the house, and taught reading, writing, and merchants' accounts; and that afterwards they should be placed out with a small premium to such trades, and to such masters, as the boys and their parents should approve of. This good man lived to see his benevolent design carried into execution; and, having amply endowed the charity with considerable estates, it has continued to this day to answer the ends for which it was intended, as many opulent tradesmen now living, who were educated there, can with gratitude testify. For several years last past the feoffees of this institution have not permitted any Dissenter to take a boy from the school as an apprentice.

A Dissenting tradesman now living, who had an apprentice from thence about thirty years since, applied for one some years afterwards, and was told by the feoffees, that his request could not be complied with, as it was their determination that no Dissenter should have a boy from that school.

A gentleman of Bewdley, now living, applied about ten years since for an apprentice: the first question the feoffees asked him was, whether he was a Dissenter, and, upon replying in the affirmative, he received the same answer\*. Knowing that the founder of the institution was a Dissenter, one would have thought that the principles of common integrity would have prevented them from such a shameful perversion of the intention of the donor: but, where bigotry supplies the place of charity and candour, shame is

\* I have frequently heard that the feoffees are equally careful in preventing the children of poor Dissenters from gaining an admittance into the said School.

generally



generally discarded, and every profession of virtue is little more than a tinkling cymbal.

Owing to the mismanagement of a former steward, the feoffees were some years back much involved in debt, and were obliged to take long credit with goods bought for the use of the house, so that nothing induced many tradesmen to continue to supply them but the expectation of their being better customers in future, which the stewards always assured them would be the case in a few years. A Dissenting tradesman of Stourbridge, who had supplied them for many years, and with whom they usually took a credit of two or three years, was informed about eight or ten years since by the then steward, who called to discharge the account with the said tradesman, that he had orders from the feoffees to go elsewhere for the goods in future. The tradesman being naturally desirous of knowing the reason of their leaving him, after having done business with him for so many years, was importunate with the steward to be satisfied on that head, to which (after much hesitation) he replied, that they did not wish to do business with Dissenters. Upon this the tradesman desired to know how this objection never occurred to them before, which was fully explained by the steward, who said, that formerly they were obliged to get goods where they could, but that now, as several leases of estates had dropped, their finances were in such a state that the feoffees were enabled to pay ready money for all the goods they bought, and, therefore, were determined now to buy of no Dissenter.

It is worthy of remark that one of the present feoffees has, or formerly had, in his possession a bust of the late pretender; and that his father was one of a party, whose usual practice it was at their convivial meetings to fall upon their knees before the said bust, and drink each of them

their first glass to the restoration of the Stuart family to the throne of these kingdoms. These are the men who, with matchless effrontery, would now persuade the nation that they are the only true friends of the constitution\*.

After the death of Mr. Foley, the congregation of Dissenters met for public worship in a meeting house in the Coventry street; and about the year , the High Church party assembled, and by violence tore up the pews and pulpit, which they burnt with the minister's bible, in the midst of the market. This atrocity the court very properly noticed, brought the perpetrators thereof to punishment, and ordered the place to be new pewed, the expence of which was paid out of the treasury. I have heard of no absolute violence exercised against the Dissenters of that town since that period; but, until the present rector of the parish, of which Stourbridge is a part, came to reside there, a stiffness and unkindness on the part of the Episcopalians was observable towards them. Two circumstances which happened in one family will tend to satisfy any person of the truth of this remark.

A clergyman of the parish having been invited to the funeral of a Dissenter, and observing, upon his being introduced into the room where the bearers were assembled, that Mr. Edge, the Dissenting minister, was one of the party, left the house in anger, and sent his clerk to apologize for his conduct by saying that, "as he could not ride  
" with Mr. Edge, if they would send his hatband and

\* The enmity of this gentleman to the Dissenters may in some measure be accounted for. An ancestor of his having by will left a large sum of money to the father of the said gentleman, IN TRUST, to be divided among the indigent Dissenting ministers of the midland counties; and he having thought fit to apply the same to his own use, the associated body of ministers in London undertook the cause, which was at length brought before the Lord Chancellor King, who awarded the money to be applied as the testator directed, and the whole of the costs (which were considerable) to be paid by the trustee.

" scarf,

“scarf, he would meet the corpse at the church.” The hatband and scarf were very properly refused, and he was obliged to bury the corpse without them.

Another clergyman of the parish being invited to a funeral in the same family, and having an equal dislike to ride with the Dissenting minister, had the art to disguise that dislike until he had procured his hatband and scarf, and till the procession was ready to move, when he galloped through the town before the hearse to the astonishment of the spectators. The names of these clergymen were Brown and Male, and the facts are perfectly in the remembrance of many persons now living: but it is justice due to Mr. Male to say that he lived to see the folly of his conduct, and afterwards became a very liberal man.

As was hinted before, the intercourse between the people of the Establishment and the Dissenters of Stourbridge was much increased by the present rector settling among them. Soon after he came he requested to be admitted a member of a reading society belonging to the Dissenters, which had been established near forty years, and of which the Dissenting minister was the president; his admission was followed by that of many gentlemen of the church, and the frequent meetings to transact the business of the society tended very much to rub off that stiffness which had before been observable in their conduct towards each other. Upon the resignation of the Dissenting minister another Dissenter was chosen president; and the same unanimity continued to prevail until the society was dissolved for the purpose of forming a different institution.

The Dissenters were thus led to suppose that the former hatred of them by the Church was done away, and they were pleasing themselves with the persuasion, until the breaking out of the riots at Birmingham completely convinced



vince them of their mistake. For no sooner did the news reach Stourbridge, but the most violent invectives were poured forth against the Dissenters by the same persons who had before professed so much liberality and kindness towards them. Every thing was said which could tend to stir up the minds of the people; the circulation of the handbill was charged upon a Dissenter, the report was propagated with great industry, and they heard from all quarters that their meeting house, and the houses of the Dissenters, would be levelled with the ground. The public houses were several of them filled with men who were ready to embark in the diabolical business; and, had it not been for the vigilance of an active magistrate, God only knows what would have been the consequence.

Thus disappointed, they evinced their determination to injure their Dissenting brethren, by withdrawing their custom from the shops of Dissenters, some of whom find their business much decreased. One tradesman, who had been in the habit of supplying many of the first families in the neighbourhood with goods, lost, immediately after the riots, thirty families who had for years had ledger accounts with him, besides many other ready money customers, and yet could never hear of the least charge which they had against him, except that of his being a Dissenter.

Some time before the Birmingham riots, the minister of a congregation of Dissenters at Cradley, near Stourbridge, interested himself in procuring a subscription for building a meeting house at a place called the Lye-waste, about a mile and a half from Stourbridge, a very populous neighbourhood, where the people are extremely ignorant, and where there is no place of worship of any denomination. The said minister, and the minister of the congregation at  
Stourbridge,

Stourbridge, had engaged to preach alternately when the place should be erected, without any salary, actuated by no other motive than the desire of doing good. Having procured a sufficient subscription for the purpose, they applied to a gentleman of Stourbridge for land to erect the building upon, who readily told them they might have which ever part of his estate they chose; in consequence of which the land was measured out, and a price was fixed on it by an appraiser, which price was agreed to by both parties; an attorney was sent for, who received instructions in the presence of both to prepare articles of conveyance; and bricks were drawn upon the spot for the building: yet, notwithstanding all this, he afterwards refused to let them have any part of it. After the Birmingham riots, other gentlemen who had land at the Lye-waste were applied to, but they all refused to sell their land for such a purpose. After this the minister of Cradley waited upon the rector of the parish, and assured him that he had no intention of disseminating any peculiar doctrines, that his only motive was to serve the best interests of his neighbours, and that, if the people of the establishment would subscribe towards building a church, he would abandon his design, and assist them in theirs: but this good young man has been unable to accomplish either; and the money now lies unemployed, and the poor of that district uninstructed.

Some months previous to the Birmingham riots, the Stourbridge Dissenters had engaged a London minister to preach a charity sermon at their meeting house, on the second Sunday in August (which was soon after the riots happened); and it is a little remarkable that the rector of the parish advertised a charity sermon to be preached by himself in his own church, *on the same day*, though no charity sermon had been preached in that church

church for some years before. As the notice was short, the sermon was advertised by handbills distributed through the parish, in consequence of which the church was extremely crowded; and, though it was professedly a *charity* sermon, the greatest part thereof consisted of invectives against the Dissenters of Stourbridge and Cradley, and of charges against the managers of their Sunday Schools which had no foundation in fact. The Dissenters not being present, could only hear this account from those liberal churchmen who heard the sermon, and who were much disgusted with the virulence of the preacher. Some Dissenters of both congregations waited upon the rector to deny the charges, and to satisfy him of their untruth—this they were enabled to do; upon which he acknowledged that he had made them upon the testimony of a woman of dissipated character. However he promised to contradict what he found he had asserted without good foundation, and to do it in every company where he had an opportunity; but whether he has performed his promise or not, has not yet come to the knowledge of the Dissenters. However the Dissenters have it now in their power to bring serious charges, and to establish them as facts, against the managers of the Church Schools. They can prove that a minister residing in the parish threatened a poor washerwoman with the loss of her employment in his family, if she did not take her child from the Presbyterian School. And yet it is well known in the parish that the Dissenters instruct the children of their schools in no other than the common doctrines of Christianity, in which all Christians agree. These are some of the scandalous proceedings of those who call themselves the disciples of him who went about doing good.

The interest of several sums of money is annually distributed



tributed to the poor of the parish in bread and cloathing, and lately the rector of the parish, and the minister of the chapel, have been accustomed to interrogate the paupers who apply for the said donations, respecting the church to which they belong; and those who are found to attend the Presbyterian meeting-house lose the benefit of the said charities.

7 DE61

ADDITIONS

## ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

After p. 52, add—The behaviour of one of my maid servants affords a pretty strong presumption that some mischief was designed me on the fourteenth of July, and that she was apprized of it. She asked leave to go and see her friends some days before, and desired to stay a few days after that time. When she went, she desired the servant boy to write to her “if any thing happened.” She not only was not solicitous about the clothes she lost, but evidently dreaded being obliged to attend the assizes. When she was subpoenaed, though on the part of our opponents, she endeavoured to evade it, by denying her name; and she either actually went to Ireland, or her friends pretended that she did, so that she could not be found at the time. Some of her connections were with the High Church party, and from some of them it is not improbable she received a hint that it would be better for her to be out of the way. Many other persons in the lower classes appear now to have had the same apprehensions of a riot. Nothing of this, however, came to my knowledge, and I had no more apprehension of any such thing, than I had at any other time in my life.

P. 52. l. 16. Read—*with respect to which it does not appear that he had any proper authority.*

P. 55. l. 2. Read—*thou wilt make a damned good cock.*

P. 59. l. 16. Read—*on Sunday the other magistrate.*

P. 72.

P. 72. l. 2. from the bottom. He has also been made steward of the manor.

P. 82. l. 7, (b.) Whatever else may be objected to my conduct, it cannot be said that, after the example of my adversaries, I ever shrunk from an investigation into the part I had acted. The day that I arrived in London I desired Mr. Russell, who had to wait on the King's ministers, to inform them that I was in town, and ready to answer any questions they might choose to put to me relating to the riot; and when the inquiry into the cause of it was proposed in the House of Commons, my friends were authorized by me to say, that I wished to be examined on the subject at the bar of the House. But in neither of the cases were my wishes gratified.

P. 83. l. 6. (b.) Besides, this was not the only fact of which he was convicted. He was seen knocking out the window frames, and beating things to pieces, and he made a fire of the boards he had pulled up. See the Trial, p. 146, &c.

P. 92. l. 6. (b.) This, however, was only with respect to that part of his loss which Mr. Russell claimed in court. In reality he was probably a loser to a greater amount.

P. 100. *At the close of the second paragraph add—*This Mr. Allen was the clergyman who fought a duel with a Mr. Delaney, and killed him. He may perhaps send *me* a challenge; but Dissenting ministers do not fight duels.

P. 121. To the note add—Will he do us the favour to say what sum was subscribed by this most respectable meeting



ing to pay for the presents they so generously voted, and will he have the goodness to tell us how soon afterwards a sufficient addition was made to it to defray the cost of them, and when the plate was presented to these worthy magistrates?

P. 127. l. 4. (b.) dele, *and that of all who were present at the time he refers to.*

P. 132. l. 5. (b.) dele, *and I believe even afterwards followed by some of the mob.*

P. 142. Note, read, when the brothels, and Mr. Brooks's house, were in danger in May last.

P. 143. l. 7. Read—*which, notwithstanding the party spirit which has so long governed some bigots among us.*

Till the whole of this part of my *Appeal* was printed off, I never read the *Letter* addressed to me on my *Address to the subscribers to the Birmingham library*, No. III. of this Appendix, by SOMEBODY M. S. printed in 1787, and generally ascribed to Mr. Clutton, a clergyman in Birmingham, whose sermon on the subject of the Test Laws Mr. Madan laments was not published. Having had a copy of this Letter sent me, I have had the curiosity to read it through, and have been not a little amused with the scurrility with which it abounds; and for the amusement of my readers, as well as to give them a specimen of the spirit which actuated the Birmingham clergy, and to enable them to judge of the tendency of their writing, and no doubt of their preaching and daily conversation, to inflame the minds of the common people against me, I shall quote some passages from it. But I wish that my

readers would first peruse the *Address* which occasioned this extraordinary Letter, and also my *Appeal to the Professors of Christianity*, to which it alludes.

According to this Mr. Clutton, I am, p. 25, "a deluded visionary;" "a proud and haughty scorner," p. 4; and "a secret assassin," p. 19. He accuses me both of "daring opposition, and subtle stratagem," p. 21; of "covered artifices to deceive the unwary," p. 1; and likewise of "outrageous bellowing," p. 25.

My *Appeal to the Professors of Christianity*, he calls "poison, and an engine of sedition," p. 5; consisting of "plausible, but treacherous reasoning, subtle sophistry, nay, "a murderous pamphlet," p. 17.

With respect to my general character, I am "a public nuisance," p. 38. and "must not expect to go unhorsewhipped." I have "forfeited all indulgence, and must expect every species of deserved retaliation, that those who have been injured by me, their friends, and allies, can inflict," p. 44.

My "attachment to Christianity," he says, p. 13, is "ideal;" for I am "funk into the gulph of deism," p. 36. He advises me to "go to a free country," (meaning, I suppose, either France or America) "which has no laws, no rulers, no religion." "There," says he, p. 40, "you may give the reins to your reason, gratify your appetites, and let loose all your lusts." But whether I go to this country or not, "a hideous gulph," (by which he evidently means hell) "is gaping for me, and my followers," p. 39.

Besides more such language as this, which, as coming from a clergyman, must not be termed *abuse*, he introduces a long epitaph for me, p. 13, of which the following is an extract.

“ The assumed meekness and simplicity of the dove,  
 “ hiding the guile and subtlety of the serpent, smoothed his  
 “ wrinkled front. The honey dew of rhetoric flowed from  
 “ his tongue, and became the unsuspected vehicle of the  
 “ poison of asps. Reason, he said, would teach us how to  
 “ weaken the authority and force of scripture, &c. He  
 “ beseeched us, for the credit of the human race, for the  
 “ sake of truth, of conscience, and our immortal souls, to  
 “ pay divine honours to his goddess, &c. &c. &c.”

It is some consolation to think, that whether I be able to find a grave or not, my enemies have already taken care to provide me with a sufficient number of epitaphs.

7 DE61

THE END.



